The University of Alberta

Tibetan Women in Costumed Dance Performance

By

Anne R. Hill ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

In

Textiles and Clothing

Department of Human Ecology

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2006

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ISBN: 0-494-13737-1
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ISBN: 0-494-13737-1

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear friend Audrey Watson who introduced me to Lama Kaldan, the Tibetan community of Alberta and Tibetan Buddhism. Her spirit inspired this work, assisting me in understanding Tibet, Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhism. I remain indebted to her generosity and kindness in showing me the way.

ABSTRACT

In March 1959, a Tibetan national uprising broke out in Lhasa the capital of Tibet. The Dalai Lama and some 80,000 Tibetans resistant to Chinese rule escaped Tibet by crossing into Northern India. Many Tibetans eventually immigrated to western countries such as Switzerland, Great Britain, Australia and Canada. The Dalai Lama insists that Tibetans-in-exile need to continue maintaining their cultural and religious practices for Tibetan cultural survival.

In June 1970, the Canadian cabinet authorized two hundred and forty Tibetan refugees to enter Canada on an experimental basis. Between March and September 1971 small groups of refugee Tibetans began arriving in Canada with some resettling and working in southern Alberta (Lethbridge and Taber). Tibetan immigrant refugees form a diaspora community adjusting culturally and socially to their new Canadian environment. Tibetans present traditional dress and dance in staged performance as a cultural representation and remembrance of their homeland. In October 2003, the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation formed a women's dance group in Calgary, Alberta performing dance in traditional dress as a way of preserving their culture, building awareness of Tibetan culture and as a means of raising funds for Tibetan projects. New developments, such as this, demonstrate a commitment to Tibetan cultural survival.

The research examined Tibetan-Canadian women of Calgary, Alberta dancing in Tibetan dress. The purpose of the study was to understand the role of dress and dance in expressing and communicating meaning and identity for Tibetan Canadian women. Ethnographic research methods were used to explore the meaning of dress in staged dance, as an expression of Tibetan cultural identity in Canada. The Tibet Canada Women's Foundation organized a dance group comprised of eight women aged 22 to 65 including dancers and choreographer. The study collected data on the eight Tibetan women by using the following techniques: in-depth audiotaped interviews, participant observation of social gatherings, dance rehearsals, practices and performances, recorded field notes and photos. The research developed an understanding of Tibetan dress and dance in performance in Canada. They expressed pride in their cultural identity while striving to ensure Tibetan continuity in Canada. They adapted and modified Tibetan dress and dance to the Canadian stage reflecting the process of cultural change. The Tibetan-Canadian women in staged performance represented and presented their culture in their own authentic voice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the Tibetan community of Calgary who took me into their lives, sharing their life histories and stories with me. A special thanks to The Tibet Canada Women's Foundation for opening the door, allowing me in to experience Tibetan culture. I would have not been able to do this work without your cooperation and assistance. I mention no names for confidential reasons but you know who you are and thank you ever so much. Thanks to Lama Kushok for sharing his knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism and culture.

I would like to thank Professor Anne Lambert of the Department of Human Ecology who talked me into returning to the university to complete my M.A.; Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky at the Ukrainian Institute who lead me through ethnic dance; and Dr. Patricia McCormack of the School of Native Studies. Without their understanding and critical assistance, this thesis would not have been possible.

Thanks to my husband, Don Hill and children (Leiann and Martyn) who without their cooperation this thesis would never have been completed. I am indebted to their understanding support throughout this endeavour.

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INTRODUCTION

Tibet covers a vast plateau in Central Asia, bounded on the north by Chinese Turkestan; on the south by Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and India; on the west by Kashmir; and on the east by China (Figure 1). The country's terrain begins at approximately 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) above sea level, with large areas in the north over 5,000 meters (16,000 feet) in elevation.

Tibet was a theocratic state with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet constituting its legitimate governing authority (Stein, 1972: 138). Melvyn Goldstein (1989) describes pre-1950 Tibet as a feudal system, which was the foundation of the political, monastic and manorial estate system. Prior to the 1950 take over by the People's Republic of China, Tibet was a monastic nation-state with thousands of monasteries in the land. The monastic system involved large monasteries such as Drepung, which, typically housed ten thousand monks creating a unique society in which Buddhism permeated every facet of Tibetan life (Thurman, 1996: 40). Their society was a remote culture with relatively few Western influences even up to the People's Republic of China takeover and the final exile in 1959 of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Prior to 1950, a keynote of Tibetan life was an acceptance of this traditional order (Snellgrove & Richardson, 1968: 258). Tibetans fell broadly into four classes: nobles, traders, peasants, and nomad pastoralists. The *nobility* were landowners who comprised an aristocracy descended from the early monarchs rulers of Tibet.

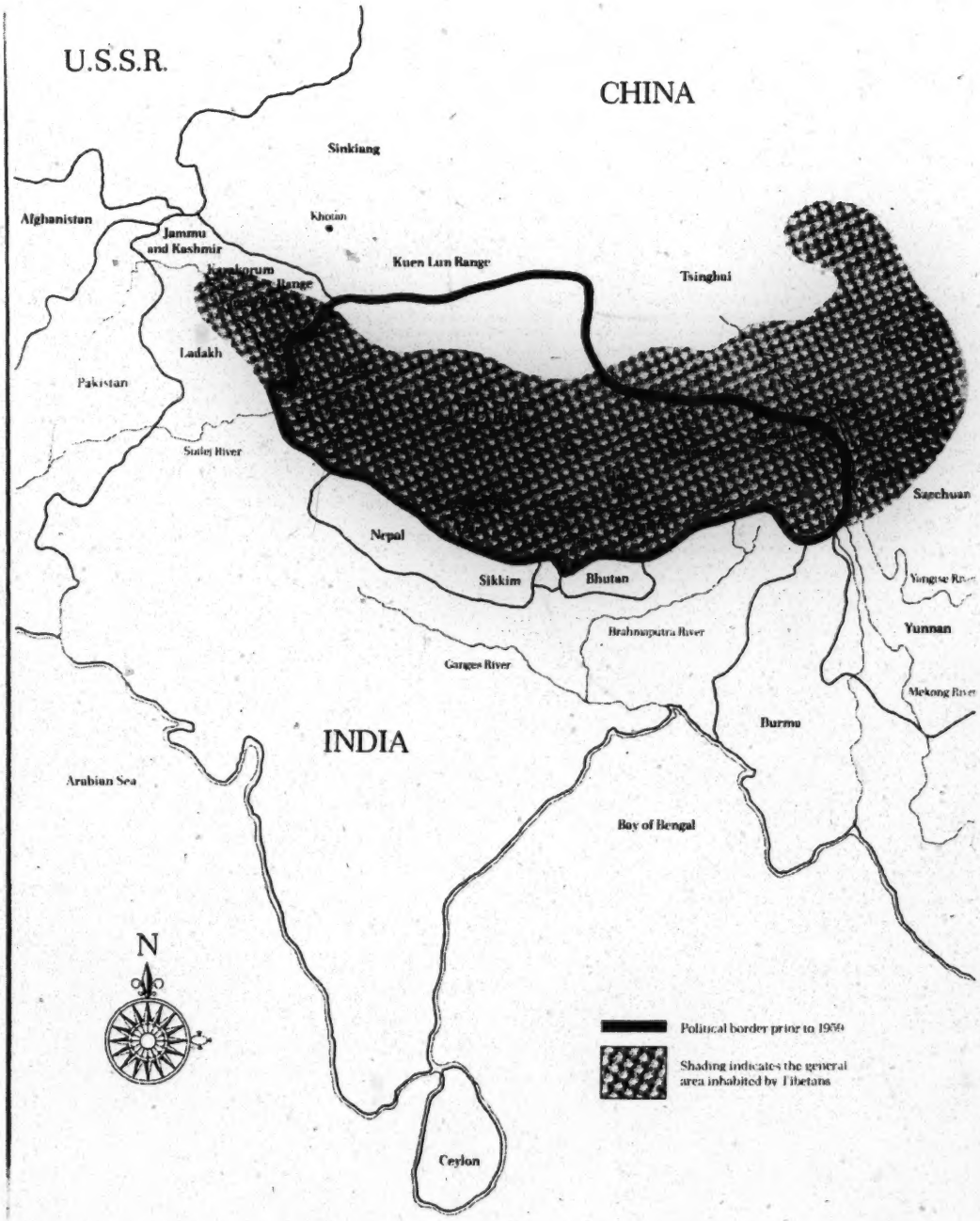

Figure #1- Map of Central Asia with Tibet Border Prior to 1959 (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Tibetans were important traders in Central Asia throughout much of their history. As a class, the *traders* ranked between the landed gentry and peasant laborers. In the 7th century CE, during the height of the Silk Road trade Tibetans were prominent dealers in goods, cultural wares and ideas, and made a great success of this commerce particularly between India and China. They traded horses, religious statues, wool products, salt and medicine for silk, tea, pearls, and other trade goods (Myers, 1984). The exchange of trade goods also facilitated the spread of Buddhism, which traveled from India to China. Tibetan traders organized tasks according to gender with women managing small shops while the men were responsible for commercial dealings involving long journeys and a great deal of time away from home.

The *peasants* were members of a subordinate class who worked and lived on the nobility's land. In this manorial system, some peasants were tied to the land. However, there were some peasants who could join local touring opera troupes, resulting in many performers being recruited from this menial class (Chand, 1982: 7).

The fourth class of Tibetans, *nomad pastoralists* included herdsmen and labourers who worked in the higher elevations and ranged over the grasslands with their hers of sheep and goats depending on the season. Although nomad pastoralists traded with local settlements for goods, they were known for their hardiness and independence

In March 1959, a national uprising against the Chinese occupation broke out in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet (Figure 1). The communist Chinese army crushed the revolt, resulting in a great loss of life and the flight of many Tibetans to safety in India. An estimated 87,000 Tibetans were killed (The Government of Tibet in Exile, 2005). As a consequence of the failed insurrection, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and some 80,000 of his followers fled Tibet by crossing into northern India (Dargyay, 1985: 114).

The eastern region of Tibet was annexed into China's western provinces (Figure 2). The remainder of Tibet's territory was reconstituted as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Today, the United States Central Intelligence Agency map of the area depicts Tibet with no political boundaries within China (Figure 3).

The largest group of refugees resettled in India. Other countries, such as Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, also opened their doors to the Tibetan diaspora. Tibetans living in exile comprise a small community in India, preserving and maintaining their unique thirteen hundred-year-old Buddhist heritage (Hampton, 1985:13). While the story of Tibetan resettlement is similar to that of many other peoples who escape war, poverty and political chaos, the degree to which Tibetans-in-exile have seized upon culture as the focus for making their new identity abroad is striking (Tibet Conservancy, Tibetans in India, 2004).

Dharamsala, a small community of 16,000 in northern India, is also home to approximately 10,000 Tibetan refugees (Figure 4). His Holiness the Dalai Lama's

Page 5 (figure #2 and figure#3) have been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was figure #2 a map depicting partitioned Tibet 2005. This was located at the website www.tibetmap.com. The other information removed was figure #3 a map of China with the annexation of Tibet 2005. This was located at the United States of America Central Intelligence Agency website www.cia.gov.

Page 6 (figure #4) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was figure #4 depicting a map of Tibet India with Dharmsala. This map was located in Jessop, Anett. (2002). Mystical Arts of Tibet. Davis, California: University of California.

official residence is in the town, as well as the seat of the Tibetan government-in- exile, making Dharamsala the cosmopolitan center of Tibetan society in exile (Calkowski, 1991:.645). The Tibetan government-in-exile has served as a focal point for Tibetan nationalism, in part by drawing critical attention to the China's governance of their former homeland.

The economy of Dharamsala is inseparable from and dependent upon the promotion of Tibetan culture. The hospitality industry, for instance, services a steady influx of tourists, journalists, pilgrims and other visitors (Calkowski 1991). The first cultural institution authorized by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in exile, was the *Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts* (TIPA). Its expressed mission is to preserve the culture of Tibet as it existed prior to the Chinese takeover (Calkowski, 1991: 645). According to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetans must maintain their traditions and religious practices in order for the culture to survive. Cultural practices are particularly important for displaced Tibetans who immigrated to western countries such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada (The official website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004).

Historically, the West has had an abiding fascination with Tibetan religion, its culture and geography (Bishop, 1989: ix). Unlike most of the 'Orient', Tibet was studied more as a visual display of an imaginary world. The numerous depictions of Tibet produced at the turn of the 20th century, according to Peter Bishop (1989), author of *The Myth of Shangri-La*, eluded the total embrace of Western Orientalism.

Edward Said (1979), in his seminal work *Orientalism*, was concerned with the creation, maintenance and reproduction of the 'Orient'. He argued that the Orient was, and is, a fundamental place – a landscape located in the Western imagination, which applies to the west's fascination with Tibet. Many 19th century travel writers depicted the Orient as a particular type of experience: a place of pilgrimage, spectacle, a totally homogeneous and coherent world of exotic customs, coupled with disturbing, yet alluring sensuality (Bishop, 1989: 7). Bishop maintains that the West's curiosity with Tibet is primarily visual, a fascination with appearances: the landscape, art, architecture, the costumes and customs of the region (Bishop, 1989: 177).

By the turn of the 20th century, travelers such as Swedish adventurer Sven Hedin who attempted to glimpse the secrets of Tibet, prompted in large part by Western curiosity. In 1901 Hedin donned a Mongolian monk's robe to explore Tibet secretly. He was soon found out and forced to leave the territory, long before reaching his intended destination, Lhasa. However some travelers such as Alexandra David-Neel, managed to enter and remain in Tibet. In 1914, she was allowed to study Tibetan Buddhism with authorized instruction from lama teachers (David-Neel, 1932: 91). David-Neel established a *spiritual* connection with Tibet. Her reports, books and lectures fed the Western appetite for this ancient Buddhist civilization.

During the 1960's, adventure tourism and trekking became popular in the Himalayan regions of India and Nepal. China cashed in on the tourism boom and by the 1980's opened Tibet to thousands of foreign travelers. Buddhist monasteries – the ones not

destroyed by the Chinese – were packaged as exotic tourist attractions. Monks, rituals and artifacts throughout the Himalayan region became the delight of photographers, trekkers and bargain-hunters (Bishop, 1989: 245). However, the tourist culture (literature, images, etc.) has to an extent created these places, the expectations about them and their representations (Bishop, 1989: 246). Tibet's mystique and exotic oriental appeal continues to fuel the packaged travel industry where 'destination travel' has become a successful enterprise. However, the survival of authentic Tibetan culture is less certain.

In the 21st century, Tibet has not disappeared from the public imagination. It continues to attract western attention. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, young Tibetan writers, Westerners, and even the People's Republic of China are all making increasing references to the importance of Tibet and its indigenous culture (Calkowski, 1991: 648). The official Chinese position, as expressed by the chair of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party, is that Tibet can do no better, considering its political, economic and cultural situation (Lowry, 1988: 49). Contrary to the U.S. Congress' resolution in 1991 that declared Tibet an occupied nation, The China Internet Information Center maintains that Tibet was peacefully liberated in 1951 and subsequent to its emancipation has enjoyed rapid political, economic and cultural development (China Internet Information Center, 2005). China portrays Tibet as part of a big Chinese family – one of many nationalities – united in the principles of equality, unity, fraternity and cooperation.

Not surprisingly, both Chinese and Tibetan agencies claim to be the authentic voice of Tibet. The China Internet Information Center, for instance, tells a very different story

than what has been espoused about the region on a website hosted by the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala. Tibetans-in-exile concerned with cultural preservation and conservation have as their prime objective the authentic presentation of Tibet's culture, as a unique expression of a distinctive people (official website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004).. The communist Chinese government, on the other hand, in their cultural exchange programs, lay claim to representing Tibetan culture as one of China's ethnic minorities (Shuzhi, 1979). It's no wonder the views are so polarized given the current state of mistrust between Tibetans living in Dharamsala and the official Chinese position on Tibet. Both remain steadfast in their claims of who has the authority to speak for Tibet.

Jamyang Norbu, a Tibetan in exile, a prize-winning novelist and political essayist, is a leading advocate of *rangzen* (independence) in the Tibetan community. He is also critical of the Chinese presentation of his homeland as a vacation mecca by maintaining that tourists are unwittingly subsidizing the eventual extinction of the Tibetan people (Avedon, 1988: 60). John Avedon asserts that the People's Republic of China regime sells tourists on Tibet's "antique society" and uses the proceeds of tourism to underwrite Chinese settlers in central Tibet.

In the refugee camps of northern India, young Tibetans are instilled with an urgent sense of responsibility to maintain their identity through language and culture. Tibetans-in-exile speak of the paramount role their Buddhist religion plays in maintaining that identity. The religious teachers, some eight hundred lamas who escaped with His Holiness the Dalai

Lama in 1959 formed the front lines of Tibetan cultural survival (Hampton, 1985: 14). Tibetan Buddhist teachers now routinely travel abroad to Europe, the Americas and Australia, teaching Buddhism to Tibetans and western students.

In 1968, the Government of Canada agreed to a request made by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to consider an experimental program of resettlement for Tibetan refugees (Appendix, Tibetan time line chart) (Dargyay, 1988). The Canadian cabinet in June 1970 then authorized two hundred and forty Tibetan refugees to enter the country. Between 1971 and 1972, two hundred and twenty-eight Tibetans were resettled in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Employment in southern Alberta (Lethbridge and Taber) was organized for the first wave of Tibetan refugees who arrived between March and September 1971. Manual labour on sugar beet farms was a challenge, but even more so was the adjustment to Western values, modern technology and Canadians who regarded the Tibetans as "exotic" or even "uneducated" newcomers (Dargyay, 1988).

Tibetan immigrants form a diaspora community in Canada, adjusting culturally and socially to their new Canadian environment. Typical of other immigrants in western Canada, such as the Ukrainians, Poles and other European nationalities, Tibetans in Canada have preserved their traditional dress and dance as both a reminder and a representation of their homeland, and its presentation is the cultural and political expression of a stateless people. Tibetans are also encouraged to do so by structures for

Canadian multiculturalism. Tibetans living in Calgary gather annually to celebrate *Losar*, Tibetan New Year, as well as the anniversary of the March 1959 uprising, and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday. These events bind the community together by providing opportunities to wear Tibetan national dress, sing traditional songs, and dance (Dargyay, 1985:117).

Immersed in the traditions of their parents, Tibetan children celebrate religious rituals, which involve chanting and praying. These and other Buddhist practices infused with Tibetan culture assist the Calgary diaspora community in forming an explicit cultural identity (Dargyay, 1985). The progeny of Tibetan refugees are constantly reminded that by preserving customs and rituals – being true to their traditions – they are sustaining the memory of their culture. The challenge for Tibetans growing up in Canada is to maintain their cultural roots through authentic presentations and representations of Tibetan arts and culture. My research is concerned with the documentation of the cultural expression of Tibetan dress and dance among Calgary's Tibetan community.

RESEARCH

TIBET CANADA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

I was granted extraordinary access to study the Tibetan diaspora in Calgary, Alberta. For over twenty years I have been a friend of this community. I was principally inspired to study Tibetan women in costumed dance performance by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's

invocation to keep the culture alive (The official website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004). In October 2003, the *Tibet Canada Women's Foundation* formed a dance group in Calgary to perform dance in traditional dress. New developments such as this demonstrate a commitment to cultural survival. Costumed dance performance may be essential in the cultural continuity of the Tibetan people. Dance and costume are infused with the spirit of the Tibetan people, expressing their unique identity no matter where they live in the world.

My research involved an investigation of Tibetan dress and dance as presented by the Tibetan women of Calgary, Alberta. Tibetan culture represented through costumed dance performance is one way of giving voice to their identity on the Canadian stage. Future generations can benefit from understanding the customs and rituals of Tibetans living in Canada. More importantly, my research builds on Dargyay's study by investigating the cultural expression of dress and dance and its meaning. The purpose of this new research, therefore, was to further an understanding of Tibetan culture and its social expression within the Canadian context.

Members of the Tibetan community in Calgary cooperated with my expressed intent to document traditional dress and dance, and, in effect, conserve their cultural heritage; this research will provide a record of Tibetan culture for future generations of Tibetans and Canadians.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

My research explored Tibetan Canadian women's use of dress in dance performance to express cultural meaning and identity within the Canadian context. The study focused on Calgary Tibetan women's participation in the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group. Research questions included why do Tibetan women perform dance in Tibetan dress? How does Tibetan dress and dance express and communicate meaning and identity for Tibetan Canadian women in performance? How does dress and dance relate to Tibetan cultural identity and continuity in Canada? What dress and dance was selected for staged performance? The main goal of the study was to develop an understanding of Tibetan dress and dance in communicating meaning and identity for Tibetan-Canadian women. Tibetans growing up in Canada struggle to maintain their cultural roots with Tibetan women to present their culture in costumed performance. Tibetan women have expressed a desire to share their dress and dance to foster an understanding of Tibetan culture for both Tibetans and Canadians alike.

My research builds on Dargyay's 1988 study, in which he found that Tibetans feel most at ease in their own cultural environment, transmitting norms and values to their children in a traditional Tibetan way. Tibetan immigrant refugees living in Canada form a diaspora culture, making every effort to blend into Canadian society while striving to maintain their Tibetan traditions within the family and community (Dargyay, 1988: 121). Tibetans expressed great admiration for the peaceful and nonviolent character of their culture with a desire to preserve their Tibetan heritage. All Tibetans expressed pride in their scrupulous work ethic, wanting to be reliable workers and good neighbours while remaining Tibetan (Dargyay, 1988: 122).

Dargyay found that young Tibetans had strong bonds with their Tibetan heritage but were not as proficient in their mother tongue. The issue is one of cultural expression and continuity in the Canadian context with Tibetans challenged to maintain their language and cultural practices. Dargyay expressed a concern over how long their Tibetan culture would last without more formal support. His study did not investigate the cultural expression of dress and dance for Tibetan-Canadians. My research emerged from the Calgary Tibetan women representing their culture through staged dance performance building on Dargyay's research. The study focused on developing an understanding of Tibetan culture and the social expression of dress and dance within the Canadian context. Studying the Tibetan dance group may contribute to understanding the representation of this ethno-cultural group within a multicultural Canadian society.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Ethnography is "an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context"(Tedlock, 2000: 455). Ethnographic research, as explicated by Barbara Tedlock (1991, 2000), was used in this study to explore the uses and meanings of dress and dance by Tibetan women as an expression of their cultural identity in Canada. The specific design of ethnographic research, inclusive of fieldwork and other methods of enquiry, produce a narrative which according to Tedlock, encompasses historical, political "and personally situated accounts" as representative of human lives. Ethnography is routinely employed in a wide

range of academic disciplines, inclusive of "cultural studies, literary theory, folklore, women's studies, sociology, cultural geography, and social psychology." (Tedlock, 2000).

A major assumption has been that ethnographers can better comprehend the beliefs, values, and behaviors of their subjects by close and extended contact with people in their everyday lives than by utilizing any other method (Hammersley, 1992). An example is Alexandra David-Neel, an author based in France, who traveled extensively throughout Tibet over a period of years between 1914 and 1922. She learned to speak Tibetan proficiently and profoundly identified with the Buddhist culture of Tibet (Tedlock, 2000). David-Neel felt that the information she gained there constituted "useful documentary evidence worthy of our attention" (David-Neel, 1932: vi). David-Neel's written accounts are a privileged view of Tibetan society prior to the 1950 takeover. Her intimate observations informed and inspired the research of my thesis.

Ethnography has undergone major changes in recent years (Morse, 2002: 52). This research includes both "traditional" and "focused" ethnography. My research is "traditional" in that the research was conducted in a culture different from my own and "focused" in that it worked primarily with the meaning of dress and dance for Tibetan women in Canada

The research was conducted in Calgary through the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation, which organized the Tibetan women's dance group. The dance group has eight members

aged 22 to 65, including the dancers and choreographer. In January 2004, I attended the inaugural performance of the Tibetan-Canadian dance group, and I completed the fieldwork in January 2005. I participated in the social activities of the Calgary Tibetan women with exposure to a variety of unique cultural experiences involving Tibetans. I studied the Tibetan women using the following primary data collection techniques: in-depth audiotaped interviews, participant observation of social gatherings, visits, dance rehearsals, practices and performances, photos, detailed field notes, and researcher's theoretical notes in a diary. Theoretical notes consisted of notes that related to conceptual or theoretical ideas emerging from observations of the Tibetan dance group (Dr. Jan Morse personal conversation 2004).

Participant observation included attending social gatherings, dance practices, rehearsals and performances to understand the role of dress and dance in expressing and communicating meaning and identity for Tibetan-Canadian women. I observed and kept detailed field notes of the dancers at rehearsals, during 'on stage' performances and at social gatherings. I also participated in Tibetan cultural events such as the Tibetan Bazaar and silent auction. Costumes and dances were photographed as a record for the research, providing a visual aid to understand Tibetan dress and dance. In this study, participants were identified with letters. Full names were not used in order to maintain confidentiality (Appendix, Human Research Ethics Board).

I also conducted in-depth interviews with members of the dance group. The interview consisted of guiding questions that focused on Tibetan identity and meaning of dress and

dance presented in cultural staged performance. The organizer of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation allowed me access to contact and interview the Tibetan women participating in the dance group. I then approached each woman individually to obtain her consent for an interview and only those women consenting were interviewed. All eight women were interviewed between September 2004 and January 2005 with some key participants providing useful data for the research. Each participant was interviewed at least once with some participants interviewed twice over the course of the project. Some informants were particularly knowledgeable and articulate, yielding rich data that helped me understand the meaning of Tibetan dress and dance.

I verified transcribed interviews by listening to the audiotape while reviewing the transcript word by word. The first stage of data analysis was the identification of dress and dance elements in the data. The next stage involved examining how these elements were linked together. The identified dress and dance categories were linked to the explanatory model of identity and meaning, analyzing data in relation to dress and dance for Calgary Tibetans.

I interacted frequently with my thesis advisor Anne Lambert to assess research analysis, which assisted in the research effort. Methodological and theoretical insights were shared with the thesis advisor and committee members, which guided my analysis. . The committee members are experienced qualitative researchers familiar with cultural research, which guided me through the research process. Threats to validity were minimized through careful attention to interview techniques, transcription, and analytic

processes. Methodological rigor in this research was assured by the multi-methods of data collection, which included participant observation, field notes, photographs, audiotaped interviews and researcher diary. As the study was ethnographic, it was conducted in the social context of the Tibetan women.

Interviews were used to explore categories of dress and dance (see Appendix, Tibetan Dances). Preliminary interview questions consisted of questions that could be answered freely with the possibility of obtaining additional information. All informants were asked the same questions, allowing interview data from one participant to be compared with other participant responses (Morse, 1992: 361-62). As the analysis progressed and I learned more, the focus of the interviews changed to elicit other information on Tibetan dress and dance. I was able to conduct the interviews in English except for the interview with the choreographer. The organizer of the group acted as interpreter for that interview. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved with participants having no more information on Tibetan dress and dance. In addition to the interview data, I maintained a diary recording my observations.

The Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics' Human Research Ethics Board was consulted and provided feedback in developing the research (See Appendix, Ethics Review). The committee members on the board approved the research ethics of this study. All participants were provided written informed consent under the principles of full disclosure. Standard principles of protection, including the right to refuse,

withdraw, or stop an interview were implemented. Original tape recordings and full transcripts will be donated to the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation.

Few research efforts (Dargyay, 1988) have focused on the ethno-cultural group of Tibetans with practically no research on the meaning of costumed performance and Tibetan cultural continuity. Relatively little is known about the role that costume and performance play in the cultural meanings of Tibetan Canadians. There is a gap in our knowledge concerning what is known about Tibetan cultural performance and the meanings of costume and performance within the Canadian context. The research project addressed this by examining the meanings of Tibetan women in costumed dance performance. Through the analytic lens of the *meaning and identity model*, the research focused on understanding Tibetan women's meaning of dress and dance as it relates to their culture in the larger Canadian environment. The research contributes to understanding the meaning of cultural performance to Tibetans in Canada.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

HUMAN ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Human Ecology can be understood "as a pluralistic approach to a series of nested, interrelated and overlapping questions concerning the relation between humans and their environments" (Visvader, 1986: 125). Researchers study the relationship between human beings and their environment. Westney, Brabble & Edwards (1988), in a similar manner,

view Human Ecology "as the holistic study of human beings, their environments, and human-environmental interactions." This approach describes in a holistic manner human experience and culture.

Westney, Brabble & Edwards (1988) elaborated that environments comprise two major types: the internal environment and the external environment. Internal environment includes physiological and mental processes, with humans at the center of the model. External environment encompasses the microenvironment as well as the macroenvironment (Westney, Brabble & Edwards, 1988: 133). Microenvironment involves the family, home, apparel, and interpersonal interactions. While macroenvironment embraces neighborhood, community, culture, education, religion, the economic system, political governance, as well as air, water and topography (see Figure #5, Human Ecological Model).

Interpersonal aspects of the micro and macroenvironments in the Human Ecology model are drawn from the disciplines of sociology, social psychology, and anthropology (Westney et al., 1988). In the human ecological model, John Vivasder (1986) regards the frame of a culture as conforming to the fit of its environment. The human ecological model provides a framework to account for the influence of environment on a culture. This model provided a framework for understanding the cultural expression of Tibetan dress and dance for Tibetan women living in the Canadian environment, as well as other environments such as Tibet and India.

Page 22 (figure #5) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was figure #5 depicting the nestled environments of the Human Ecological Model. This was located in Huitt, W. (2003). A Systems Model of Human Behavior, at Valdosta State University website http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/materials/sysmdlo.html.

DIASPORA

Tibetan-Canadians face challenges that countless immigrant refugees have encountered while adjusting to a new society. Tibetans form a *diaspora community*, using different arts to assert and represent their identity for the maintenance of their common cultural identification.

The scattering of cultural groups from their original homeland to various 'host' countries describes the basic understanding of diaspora (Turino, 2004: 4). Thomas Turino argues that diaspora consists of groups of people, such as immigrants and refugees, who have left their original country strive to maintain a common social identification "and links to cultural exchange around the symbol of 'home'." This concept of diaspora associated with exile and displacement applies to Tibetan refugees who form a cultural community.

Edward Bruner argued that meaning emerges when traditional presentations are reworked and transformed in the ritual of performance for dialogue between past and present (Turner & Bruner, 1986). It is through this process that contemporary lives are interpreted in light of a relevant past with "cultural change, cultural continuity, and cultural transmission" (Bruner, 1986: 12). Ritual and performance are important in the cultural transmission of ideas, values, and meanings. Bruce Kapferer (1983) further argues that metacommunication about cultural ideas and understandings, occurs through the power of performance in ritual.

Marica Calkowski (1991) discusses the role of audience as active interpreters, critics and respondents linked to the concept of 'frame', which defines the set of messages about which it communicates. She identifies one of the tasks in the ethnography of performance as determining the communicative means that enables audiences to identify performance genres. Calkowski's suggestion is that theater can take on the proportions of metaritual. Tibetan theatre, performance and dance have cultural meaning communicating metamessages linked to 'frame' that defines the messages for Tibetans and Westerners. In Tibetan dance and the Tibetan Opera, the costumes, music, event and performers all play a role in signaling meaning.

The group experience of performance tends to stimulate powerful emotional effects and a special kind of physical bond with others (Turino, 2004: 18). Turino cites participatory music, dance, chanting, and marching as offering the greatest potential – more than any other art forms – for creating a concrete sense of identity. Music and dance are frequently central to social events in which diaspora communities reinforce the values and traditions of their homeland (Dietrich, 2004: 104). Turino emphasizes the important link between artistic practices and forms *within* diaspora communities, connecting art, identity and social formations.

Music is a vital element in the formulation of cultural meaning and identity. According to Turino, music is key to discriminating cultural identity from disparate social groups, locations, and types of experience (Turino, 2004: 17). Sound and motion in participatory

dance plays a role in the creation of an identity, and by involving and coordinating groups of people in singing, chanting, and dancing, it creates the sense of collective unity. Therefore, cultural continuity must be constantly reasserted and redefined, especially among diaspora communities in which music is central to cultural meaning (Dietrich, 2004:103-104).

Turino views participatory music, dance, chanting, and marching as offering the potential for creating a concrete sense of identity more than any other art form. Music and dance are frequently central to social events in which diaspora communities reinforce homeland values and traditions (Dietrich, 2004: 104). Turino emphasizes the important link between artistic practices and forms within diaspora communities, connecting art, identity and social formations. Specific potential of the different arts to create and represent diaspora identities may be of particular interest to Tibetans living in Canada.

DANCE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Lange argues that human movement, as a means of communication and expression, is the basic material of dance (Lange, 1980:13). Dance as a semiotic has symbols that are created out of movement to communicate and express meaning (Lange, 1980: 13). Rhythmic patterns create a system of ordering movement, reflecting other cultural manifestations by being a vehicle through which culture is learned. A general knowledge of society is vital in identifying and analyzing the characteristics of dance (Hanna, 1979:

40). Lange, in focusing on semiotics and dance, maintains that particular symbols in dance evolve from the meaning of the dance movement itself.

Hodgens focused on how dance varies in the social, artistic or ritualistic context in which it appears and the function it serves such as education, therapy or recreation (Hodgens, Adshead: 60). Dance creation and reception is according to the traditions and conventions of a particular social group. Hodgens' premise is based on understanding dance through an extensive knowledge of its location and setting. In this sense, dance is a social and cultural product, which is located within a specific time and place directly related to beliefs, knowledge and values (Hodgens, Adshead: 114). The process of understanding dance involves knowing the background of the socio-cultural context, the conventions and traditions of the genre and style. Lange suggests that cultural significance is what is decisive in interpreting dance. He argues that dance, as part of a culture, is subjected to continual change including territorial distribution (geographic distribution of dance styles, dialects and genres) as well as dance forms (individual interpretation and changes in style from one period to another).

National Dance

National dance has been used to express allegiance to a state or potential state, as a positive symbol of a people, is important to the investigation of ethnicity and dance. Andriy Nahachewsky discussed how national dance traditions have been actively cultivated in Europe since the end of the 19th century, forming the central core of ethnic

dance revivals (Nahachewsky, 2004). He illustrated how romantic nationalism had a profound influence on ethnic dance in the Western world. National culture and national dance are a created phenomenon with nationalistic perspectives motivating many ethnic dance enthusiasts. During the second half of the 19th century, cultural nationalism was a seminal force in the birth of folk dance movements and dance research across Europe and the West. A number of newly independent countries were established in Europe, with nation builders visualizing the use of dance performance as a powerful tool to raise the national consciousness of dancers, members of the nation and transnational audiences.

For example in 1900, Norwegians were actively involved in the process of cultural nationalism and folk dance revival to build their national identity and to obtain both cultural and political independence (Nahachewsky, 2004 Chap. 11: 3). The Norwegian folk dance revival was associated with the struggle to further a Norwegian written language, culture and political independence (Bakka, 1981:23). Folk dance revivals organized along national lines underscore the continued connection between folk dance and cultural nationalism. National dance revivals were active constructions of a specific history with the power of national dance tradition resting on spreading the idea of a people's existence (Nahachewsky, 2004 Chap. 11: 8).

Catherine Foley's accounts about the development of Irish cultural identity in the same period provide another example of cultural nationalism and dance (Foley, 2001: 35). She demonstrated how cultural practices were used to assert cultural nationalism with Irish language and step dance becoming a focal point for Irish cultural representation. Irish

step dance demonstrates how the local, national, and global are all interconnected with each relying on the other for inspiration, as well as economic and cultural survival. In Ireland, dance practices have assimilated related forms and styles that satisfy the needs of performers or meet socio-cultural and political aims, which is consistent with dance and cultural nationalism. In general, dance scholars have investigated the relationship between dance, cultural identity, and nationalism.

Traditional Dance

In 'Traditions of Indian Folk Dance', Kapila Vatsyayan is concerned with the dance traditions of India. She defined traditional dance as dance with a history of activity within the culture. She classified traditional Indian dance as follows: hunt dances, dances of fertility rites, rituals, magic and trance, dances around agriculture, dances revolving around seasons and festivities, dance-dramas revolving around themes and epics, devotional dances, and traditional dance-drama forms ranging from street plays to cycle plays (Vatsyayan, 1977: 30). Her premise is that dance by overlapping and partially merging embodies all the layers of Indian society. She included both tribal and classical dance forms in assisting to develop an understanding of traditional Indian dance. It is interesting that her view on Indian dance tradition incorporates the idea of a continuous process of flux, recognizing that traditional dance forms change over time. Vatsyayan views traditional dance activities as involving elements of continuity and change.

Shanti Pillai (2002) analyses the Indian classical dance *bharatanatyam,* as a tradition and a carrier of culture. Innovators of this traditional Indian dance form express their present-day experiences, responding to historical conditions. However, a sense of urgency seems to pervade discussions about the future of this art form, raising questions of what constitutes Indian "tradition" and what role it will play in a rapidly changing India (Pillai, 2002: 23). *Bharatanatyam* has a long history of adaptation and modification with change accelerating and continuing, creating tensions both in India and abroad as to what constitutes this classical Indian dance. Pillai's research rethinks the cultural expression of Indian dance within the global and local context as it responds to local, national and global change.

In China, from the earliest recorded times, the Chinese people have expressed themselves in song and dance from the magical fertility dances to those expressing hope for a good harvest (Alley, 1984: 34). Song and dance became a part of court ritual with state music composed for emperors, in which dancers moved while holding their hands in various ritual positions. The development of the Chinese Opera from song and dance seems to have taken place in the imperial courts where rulers demanded amusements from acrobats, jesters, and storytellers (Alley, 1984: 34). Music, narrative and dance began to be integrated into the precursor of opera. The Yuan period (1279-1368) is considered the golden age of classical opera. It was in the Yuan period that many stories in the oral tradition began to be used as themes for the opera.

After the Chinese revolution, a new form of opera arose with China's Red Army telling stories of everyday life and the people's struggle to rebuild China. These new liberation operas have been accorded an honoured position in China's operatic tradition along with the classical Peking Opera. In China, there are folk dances such as the stilt dance of Swatow, a butterfly chase from Fukien, a lotus flower procession from Shensi, and the piggy-back dance from Hunan (Bowers, 1960: 274). The Chinese like to use folk dance as a means of fostering national spirit, such as importing *Yangko*, a skipping dance, from Sinkiang/Turkestan, an outermost province on the border with Russia. It is this alien dance *Yangko*, which was taught to Communist youths to greet important foreign visitors (Bowers, 1960: 274). Dances include those of China's most distant borders: Tibet, Korea and Mongolia, as well as China's most removed and atypical people, the Uighurs, the Yis, Lis, and Yaos. China has imported dance from the outermost provinces to feature ethnic minority dance, such as Tibetan folk dance in the folk arts of China.

In 'The Many Faces of Korean Dance', Judy Van Zile (2001) examines the variety of dances classified by Koreans as traditional dance *chont'ong muyong*. Although they differ in terms of contexts and manner in which they were performed, Koreans believe that most have been passed down over a long period of time, reflecting the uniqueness of Korean culture. Today, traditional Korean dances include royal court dances with the dancers wearing masks in the Crane Dance. The *Cho'oyong* Dance was performed outdoors to expel evil spirits at New Year's. Masked dance-dramas (*t'alch'um*) were performed to cleanse houses and villages, protect from calamities, and assure good crops (Van Zile, 2001: 180). Masked dance-dramas performed today perpetuate traditional

satirical stories, which maintains through song and dance Korean traditional and cultural stories. Dance has played an integral role in Koran society supported by court and religious institutions with traditions carried on at the same time that new forms were developed over its history.

In Korea, there are only four traditional Buddhist dances performed today (Van Zile, 2001: 182). The Butterfly Dance *Nabich'um*, symbolizes the spreading of Buddha's will, is performed by dancers wearing white cloaks with extremely long sleeves. Dancers move slowly lifting their arms sweeping gently forward and backward like the wings of a butterfly in slow motion. The Cymbal Dance *Parach'um* spreads the word of Buddha with dancers playing cymbals overhead contributing to the overall drama of the dance. In the Monk's Drum Dance *Popkoch'um*, the dancer performs highly stylized movements, while playing a drum mounted in a tall wooden frame. In the Dance of the Eightfold Path *T'aju*, an octagonal box with inscriptions on each side, representing the eightfold way of Buddhism, is placed on the ground between two dancers who gently tap the top of the box with a stick. The Korean drum dance at New Year's is a Buddhist dance, performed primarily by male monks on traditional religious occasions. This and other Buddhist dances are a unique and distinct expression of Korean culture.

Ethnic Dance

Andriy Nahachewsky defines "ethnic dance" as dance that makes explicit reference to a culture in a cross-cultural context. Ethnic dance assists in understanding the uses of dance

by ethnic groups as a "culture" whether they live in their homeland, or live in diaspora (Nahachewsky, 2004 Chapter 3: 13). Ethnic dance is connected to the concept of "ethnicity" with an ethnic group as a cultural group sharing a perceived ancestry, homeland, history, and culture, emphasizing language, religion and traditions. Ethnic dance becomes a component of these shared cultural traditions (Nahachewsky, Chap. 3: 12). Joann Kealiinohomoku argues that ballet belonging to western culture- a specific cultural group based on shared ancestry, history, homeland and culture- constitutes ethnic dance (Kealiinohomoku, 2001: 40). Kealiinohomoku maintains that "ethnic dance" forms are not derided when including the western dance form of ballet (Kealiinohomoku, 2001:33).

Nahachewsky shares Kealiinohomoku's cross-cultural perspective in defining "ethnic dance" and how this definition specifically avoids any implications of high status or low status between western and non-western forms of dance expression (Nahachewsky, 2004 Chapter 3: 14). Some ethnic groups live in their homeland, while others form diaspora communities in 'host' countries. Nahachewsky's definition of "ethnic dance" refers to dance as representing a specific culture in a cross-cultural situation. The concept of ethnic dance relates to cultural groups such as the Ukrainians, Italians, and Poles employing dance to express cultural identity.

Nahachewsky regards the purpose of dancing, the dance type, and the cultural identity of the performers and spectators as important factors in ethnic dance. In his model, national identity as symbolized through dance plays a role, whether dominant or secondary, in a

cross-cultural context. At the core of "ethnic dance", revival dance makes a conscious and explicit reference to cultural precedent by its fundamental connection to cross-cultural significance (Nahachewsky, Chap.10: 1). He suggests that performed national dance as an expression of allegiance to a state or potential state in a revival context can be performed as a positive symbol of a people.

Ethnic dance, with national motivations in a cross-cultural context, provides the framework for describing and analyzing Tibetan dance forms and genres in Canada. Ethnic dance is useful for developing an understanding of Tibetan dance in that they form a diapora community in Calgary. Tibetan dances were organized on Nahachewsky's recommendation to develop a classification system for Tibetan dance (Nahachewsky, personal conversation, April 2004).

DRESS: AN OVERVIEW

Dress refers to all the ways the body is adorned including clothing, jewelry, headdresses, tattooing, scarification, and body piercing. In this research, costume refers to the use of dress in staged performances. The study of dress as a means of communication provides us with a way to examine culture as enacted by individuals in their negotiation of daily life. Cultural categories, principles, processes, social distance, daily communication, and history are accessible through research on dress (McCracken 1988: 61). Grant McCracken contends that dress within a society provides a fixed set of messages and is a conservative code for transmitting information (McCracken 1988: 68). It is in this

capacity that dress performs important social, political, and cultural work. Dress has serious implications, as it is one of the ways whereby a culture transmits ideas and organizes itself socially, economically, and politically.

Dress plays an important role in our lives signaling our personal worth, identity, values, and beliefs (Cunningham and Voso Lab, 1991: 1). Cunningham and Voso Lab, in reviewing clothing research, maintain that dress has multiple meanings reflecting culture through which we can substantiate our sense of self and our place in society. Dress, as a conspicuous object of popular culture, is instrumental in serving to construct self. The social role of clothing raises many questions such as what is our vocabulary of dress-related meanings and how is clothing used to shape and define our identities.

The meaning of dress is captured through understanding how it functions in a culture. Dress is a window into a culture because it "visually attests to salient ideas, concepts and categories fundamental to culture" (Arthur 1999: 1). Therefore, dress can reveal connections within a society. It has the potential to transmit non-verbal information, and ought to be considered as part of the total system of communication within a culture (Cordwell & Schwarz, 1979: 1).

Symbols in dress delineate and visually define the boundaries of the social unit through the transmission of non-verbal information. Cordwell and Schwarz suggest that we consider dress as part of the total system of communication within a culture. The language of personal dress can express social roles, social differentiation, social worth,

economic status, political symbols, magico-religious condition, social ritual, reinforcement of beliefs, customs and values. Society's language of personal adornment depends on environmental resources, technical developments and cultural standards (Roach & Eicher, 1979: 7). Dress is a universal feature of human behavior and an examination of what it reveals and attempts to conceal contributes to our knowledge about the fabric of culture and our understanding of human nature (Cordwell & Schwarz, 1979: 1).

Dress symbolically communicates a number of functions within society and also within people's lives. Dress, as a complex and generally gender-specific body covering, can express both cultural identity and individual meaning (Maynard, 2002: 190-1). Its multiple and various meanings may differ widely between the wearer's intentions and other people's perceptions about what is worn. Arthur, in her review of ethnographic fieldwork, argues that unique dress attached to specific cultural groups functions to construct social boundaries by separating group members from outsiders, while bonding members to each other (Arthur 1999: 3).

Dress confers identities on individuals by announcing and communicating positions in the social structure while integrating economic, religious and political activities. Identities are communicated through dress by signaling the social position of the wearer within an interaction situation. Identities communicated by dress are personal and completely social, in that they are socially acquired adding meaning to social interactions.

Dress is a semiotic, which can signal status, identity, gender, ethnicity, values, and beliefs (Cunningham & Voso Lab, 1991: 1). In their review of clothing research, Cunningham & Voso Lab maintain that dress implies cultural meaning through which people can identify their status in society. Dress also serves as the memory of a culture – a record and a guide to cultural knowledge. McCracken cites H.J. Drewal's ethnographic study of the *Yoruba* people of Africa, which illustrates how dress organizes cultural principles, encodes them, and manifest cultural meaning (McCracken, 1988: 60). In this capacity, dress is both a valuable and powerful means of communication within ritual and performance.

Political change, fluctuations in technology and the social structure, affect specific aspects of dress that declare particular identities. Dress has utility as an emblem of political power and ideology. Dress has been used to mobilize populations. Political change can affect specific features of dress to declare distinct identities. Throughout history, political organizations have used dress to announce group affiliation, for example, the *brown shirts* in Nazi Germany and the *black shirts* of Fascist Italy (Falasca-Zamponi, 2002: 146).

Another historical example of dress and its affect on the politics of a nation is how clothing at the time of the French Revolution was used to challenge values, creating a new political culture (Wrigley, 2002: 19). The *sans-culotte* (literally meaning 'without breeches') was a French 18th century revolutionary movement whose members wore longer straight legged pants and a red cap to distinguish themselves as the "men of the

people," signaling their political identity (Wrigley, 2002: 19). In Australia, Aboriginal people have communicated their politics by wearing T-shirts emblazoned with slogans for social action and political change (Maynard, 2002: 200).

Elements of dress communicating identity depend on the economy, polity, ethnicity, kinship and religion. Political change, fluctuations in technology and the social structure affect specific aspects of dress that declare particular identities. The changes that occur relate to political systems, economic cycles, trade patterns, fashion, shifts in age, ethnicity, technology and beliefs. Social structures include belief systems that shape moral and aesthetic standards for dress (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992: 6). Individuals may also abandon or adapt their dress to signal a changing social identity. In the Meaning and Identity Model, dress sets the stage for nonverbal communication, signaling cultural identity an essential component in staged performance. Dress may have a role in the maintenance of cultural continuity and identity in diaspora communities.

MEANING AND IDENTITY MODEL

The theoretical framework organizing my research is the *Meaning and Identity Model* based on the *symbolic interactionism* perspective developed by Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992). They focused on how dress functions as a medium of effective communication, signaling meaning and identity.

In *symbolic interactionist* theory, people acquire their identity by way of interaction in social, physical and biological settings. The symbolic interactionist approach advanced beyond communication via discourse to include communication through appearance, with dress having a certain priority over discourse in establishing identity (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992:5). In this approach, the 'self' acquires an identity with dress, which announces that identity for a socially situated individual.

Roach-Higgins & Eicher advance their model by illustrating the social aspect of dress and its communicative function. The authors maintain that the meaning a person attributes to dress is based upon the individual's socialization in a cultural context. Therefore, social aspects of dress play a role in the communication of identity, infusing cloth and dress with meaning to communicate gender, ethnicity, and status (Schneider, 1987: 412).

Dress confers identity upon individuals through communication by signaling position within a social structure – economy, polity, ethnicity, kinship, and religion. Reciprocally, elements of dress, and the identity it bestows, are dependent upon social structures inclusive of the belief systems that shape moral and aesthetic standards for dress (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992: 6). Dress sets the stage for nonverbal communication establishing identity and meaning.

Lynch, Detzner and Eicher (1995) used this model in their study of Thailand Hmong refugees who settled in the U.S.A. They investigated the use of dress as a medium to

express a vision of cultural life responsive to the Hmong cultural past and their new American context. Their research was part of a larger investigation focused on the use of dress within ritual to express and resolve conflicts dividing the Hmong American community (Lynch, Detzner & Eicher, 1995: 111). Conflicts arose out of attempts by members of the Hmong community to reconcile the cultural life of the past with their present lives in the U.S.A. The researchers maintained that dress was used by the Hmong to express and interpret cultural change in the American context.

Tibetans like the Hmong are refugees who have settled in North America adapting to western society. Both groups have had to adjust culturally to living in a new social, cultural, economic and political environment. Dress is used by both cultural groups for cultural identity. The research on Tibetan women in costumed dance performance is grounded on Roach-Higgins and Eicher's *Meaning and Identity Model*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TIBETAN DRESS

Traditional dress in Tibet varies according to region, season, rank, and position Tibetan society has four Buddhist lineage traditions, each having different dress assemblages to identify a monk's level of practice and rank. Robes were and are still used to identify their Buddhist lineage, training, and practice (Plates 1, 2 & 3).

Tibetan dress reflects regional differences in both clothing and headdress style. Married women of central Tibet, for example, wore aprons to signal their marital status and regional identity in society (Plate 4) (Gabriel, 1995). Government officials, prior to 1950, wore specific dress to identify their position and rank within society (Plates 5, 6 &7). The judiciary and military wore special dress, such as robes and uniforms, which demonstrated their identity and indicated their position in the social order (Goldstein, 1989). The wide fringed hat, commonly called a *sogsha* or Mongolian hat, was worn by an Official's Servant such as a tax collector to denote position in Tibetan society (Plate 8) (Norbulingka Institute, Aristocrats and Government Officials, 2005).

Both genders wore chupas, kimono like garments tied with a sash at the waist (Goldblatt, 1993: 63). Nomadic men stowed objects and supplies inside the chupa or tied them to the waist sash for a day's journey or lengthy expedition. Traditionally, the *chupas* worn by nomadic men hung to their knees unlike floor length chupas worn by nomadic women, the nobility, or Lhasa government officials. *Chupas*, made of cotton, silk or sheepskin were worn with cotton or silk shirts (Plates 9, 10, 11 & 12). Traditional dress worn by noble women in Lhasa included elaborate headdresses, jewelry adorned with precious stones, a gold or silver charm box around the neck, and a wide band of pearls over the left shoulder (Norbu & Turnbull, 1968: 79) (Plates 13 & 14). The amount of ornamentation was dependent upon social class, for example, upper-class Lhasa women wore elegant Chinese silk *chupas* and multi-coloured striped wool aprons with gold brocade on the upper corners.

Plate #1- Monks blowing horns *rgya gling* on monastery roof 1937. (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a Lost World: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #2- High Lama on Tibetan rug 1918-1921 (Courtesy of Alexandra David-Neel Foundation, Digne-les-Bains, France)

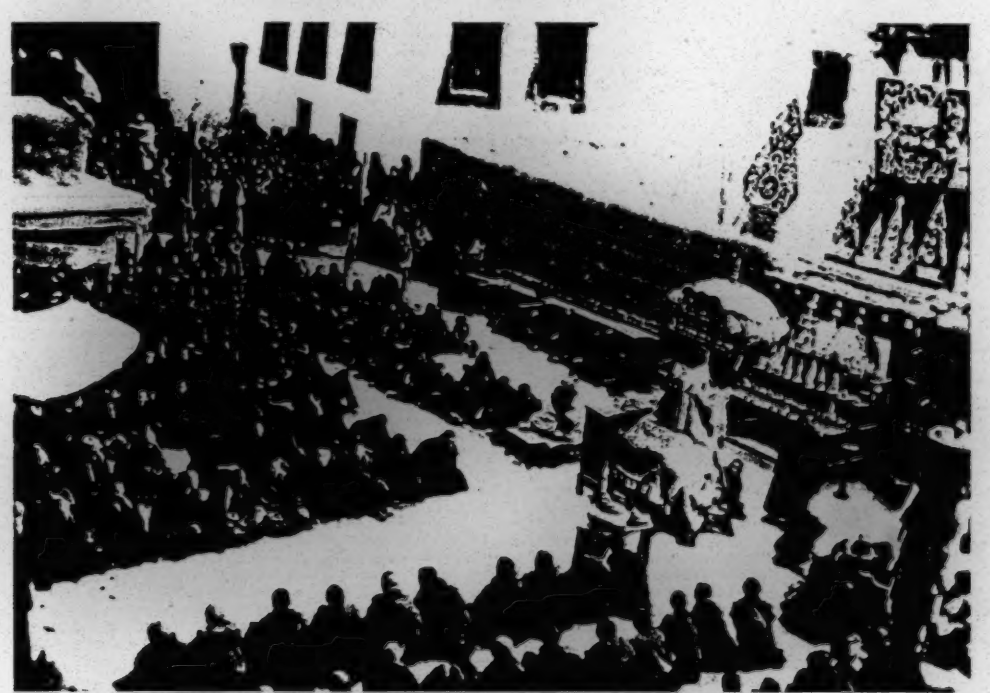

Plate #3- Tormla (Butter Sculpture) Festival at Kumbum 1918-1921. (Courtesy of Alexandra David-Neel Foundation, Digne-les-Bains, France)

Plate #4- Governor of Shigatse with his wife in Lhasa dress wearing the traditional apron *pangdhen* 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome)

Plate #5- The Prefect and military Commander of Shigatse 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome)

Plate #6- Government Official Jimed Traring with earring 1940's (Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome)

Plate #7- Finance Minister official summer attire made with golden yellow Chinese silk. (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #8- Tibetan Tax Collector Hat (Tibet Canada Women's Foundation, Calgary Alberta)

Plate #9- Male Nomad Costume with charm box (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Eastern Tibetan nomadic women wore less elaborate headdresses than the Lhasa nobility. However, they distinguished themselves by braiding colourful ribbons into their hair (Goldblatt, 1993: 63). In the Amdo region of northeastern Tibet women braided their hair into 108 braids, which are considered auspicious to complement a massive headdress made of lambskin. The lower section of the headdress was comprised of silver coins, amber and coral beads in accordance with the style of the region (Plate 14). While an Amdo women's *chupa* was cut identical to the men's *chupa*, however, it was floor-length and constructed with more lavish material. The inner robe was sheepskin lined with imported Chinese sateen silk, and the outer robe was made of imported Chinese silk brocade (Reynolds, 1978: 28).

While there are distinctive regional styles of dress, most Tibetan jewelry is made of material acquired through trade such as pearl, amber, turquoise, and coral. The double or triple size *amulet box* was worn with necklaces of coral, turquoise and amber (See Plate #15). Numerous superstitions, beliefs, stories, legends and practices surround turquoise according it great symbolic significance. Tibetans believe that wearing a turquoise ring would assure a safe journey and finding a turquoise stone would bring the best of luck. Other adornments typical of Tibetan jewelry include pearl and coral beads, which are highly prized by Tibetans. According to tradition, red coral attracts success and gains status. Moreover, the colour red is considered auspicious and worn by Buddhist monks (Gabriel, 1995: 95).

Plate #10- Nomad Men's Costume from Eastern Tibet (Courtesy of Valrae Raynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #11- Group of Nomads from Amdo1930 (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #12- Male Nomad in fox fur hat (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

NOBLE WOMAN
A married woman from one of the noble
families of Lhasa, ca. 1940, would have
attired herself in a dress of this type for social en-
gagements. The brilliant magenta satin
and black cut-velvet chuba is made from
Chinese cloth and worn floor length. The
dress is from the collection of the present
Dalai Lama's elder sister. The multi-col
ored apron made of three lengths of native
serged wool cloth is traditional for
women of Central and Southern Tibet.
The Y-shaped headdress marks the wearer
as a resident of Lhasa, the size and num
ber of the corals, pearls, and turquoises
would be determined by the wealth of the

Plate #13- Lhasa Noble Women's dress 1940 (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #14- Nomad Women's dress from Northeastern Tibet (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Sub-styles of dress communicate information about the region, class, and status of Tibetans living in Tibet and nearby Nepal (Goldblatt, 1993 and Gabriel, 1995). The *Nyinba* people, a relatively prosperous group of Tibetans who migrated to Nepal in the 14th century CE, wear "one of Asia's most extravagant headdress forms," contradicting the region's reputation as one of the poorest districts in the land (Gabriel, 1995: 90). The *Nyinba* practice of fraternal polyandry, described by Gabriel as "a way of population expansion control tied in with economic considerations", distinguishes these people in the region and that distinction is reflected though their headdress. Flamboyant ritual garments are made with expensive materials such as tie-dyed wools with colourful appliqués and Chinese silks. The *taikor* headdress, as it is known, is found in a handful of villages in the Simikot area of Nepal. The *Nyinba* assert that the *taikor* came from Tibet, and regard it as a supreme status symbol, a visual statement by wealthy women proclaiming pride in their Tibetan ancestry. The *taikor* with precious stones acts as a form of ritual protection for the head (Gabriel, 1995: 95). Ceremonial jewelry, festive garments and the *taikor* are only worn during religious festivals and weddings.

FOLK SONGS, DANCES AND RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Tibetan entertainment included lone traveling bards, opera troupes, and lay dance groups. The bards were men of nomadic origin who chanted verses of the *Gesar Epic,* a saga relating to a celebrated king. Some Tibetan Opera troupes and dancers traveled, while other lesser opera companies performed for their own villages and nearby locales (Plate 16). The dramas consisted of operatic recitative and chorus, broken up with interludes of

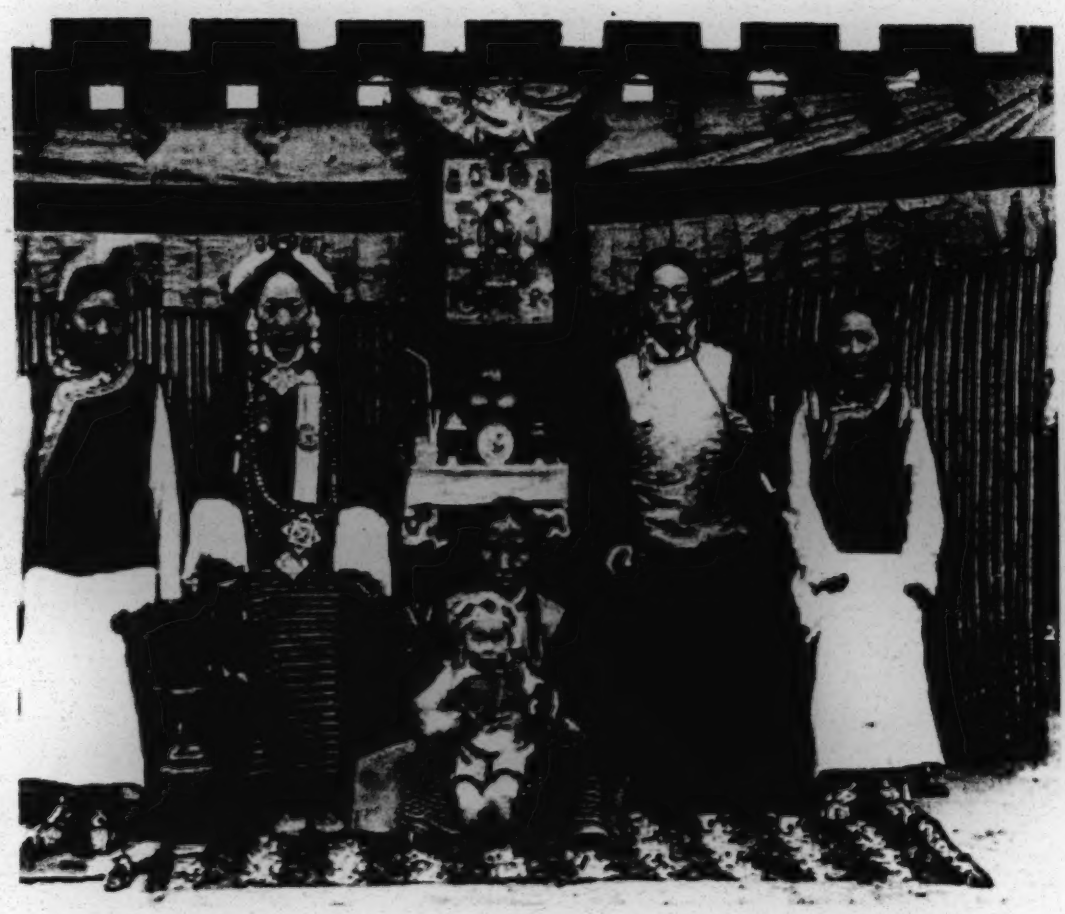

Plate #15- Lhasa Noble woman wearing headdress and amulet (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

circular dancing to the music of drums and cymbals. The most important plays performed by lay drama groups, were based on the lives of nobles and religious leaders of Tibet (Taring, 1970: 181). This kind of entertainment was featured during community celebrations, such as the conclusion of the fall harvest, as well as other seasonal festivals. Tibetans also performed folk songs and dances in their own households (Snellgrove & Richardson, 1968: 257). Itinerant monks were known to tell religious stories and perform religious dramas recounting historical figures with a reputation for Buddhist piety (Snellgrove & Richardson, 1968: 258).

Tibetan songs and dances accompanied a variety of events and activities, from weddings to everyday tasks like making *dri* (yak) butter or sowing the field with seeds. Music was a way of livening up routine jobs with the voices of women marking the rhythmic tamping down of a freshly laid earth floor. Village songs and dances expressed enjoyment or praise of everyday life (Plate 17). Children learn these dances by watching the elder members of their community (Ross, 1995: 4). Dances performed by lay Tibetans include Harvest Festival Dances, After Harvest Dance, Everyday Dances, Celebration Dances at New Year's and weddings, and *Ling Dro Dechen Rolm* (Appendix, Tibetan Dances). Men and women formed a circle during a party or celebration to sing and dance, stamping their feet in styles that varied by region (Ross, 1995: 3). There were the quick-stepping dances of central Tibet known as *toeshays*, accompanied by a *dramyen* (a six-stringed Tibetan lute), whereas the Khampa people performed the grander movements of the *dro* dance of eastern Tibet.

Page 54 (plate #16 & 17) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was plate #16 depicting a Tibetan Opera Troupe. This was located at the Alexandra David-Neel Foundation in Dignes-les-Bains France. The information removed was plate #17 depicting Tibetan men and women at a Tibetan village dance. This was located at The Tibet Map Institute website http://perso.wanadoo.fr/tibetmap/p36.html**.**

Important events like weddings and the Tibetan New Year known as *Losar* determined a style of dress to reflect the prominence of the occasion. Richly embroidered *chupa* robes and other splendid garments were a vital component of New Year's celebrations (Plates 18 & 19). The robe of the annually appointed Yaso General, a *Losar* Official, is part of The University of Alberta Mactaggart Collection. The robe in the Mactaggart Collection is constructed with rich metallic Russian brocade, illustrating the costume pomp and pageantry of a *Losar* celebration (Plate 20). Brocade robes worn by lay officials are believed to be Mongol in origin (Norbulingka Institute, 2004). An historic photograph taken during *Losar* depicts an entire complement of government officials dressed in rich brocade *chupas* (Plate 18). The Mactaggart Collection has richly woven silk and metallic brocade *chupas*, which could have been worn by these lay officials (Plates 21, 22 & 23).

Lavish state ceremonies were performed in Lhasa not as mere pageantry but as part of religious ritual. *Losar* as the most important religious festival of the year was held within the Drepung and Sera monasteries near Lhasa (Duncan, 1964: 143). The ills of the old year were solemnly expelled in lengthy religious dances, which were part of the *cham*, a prescribed repertoire of formal dance that could only be performed by Buddhist monks and lamas (Plate 24). New Year's celebratory dances were performed sequentially, beginning with the *Gudo-cham* which inaugurated the cycle, three days in advance of the Tibetan calendar new year (Duncan, 1964: 143). The purpose of the *Gudo-cham* is to exorcise demons or evil spirits believed to be responsible for calamities such as hail, floods, sickness, poverty or any other similar misfortune over the past year.

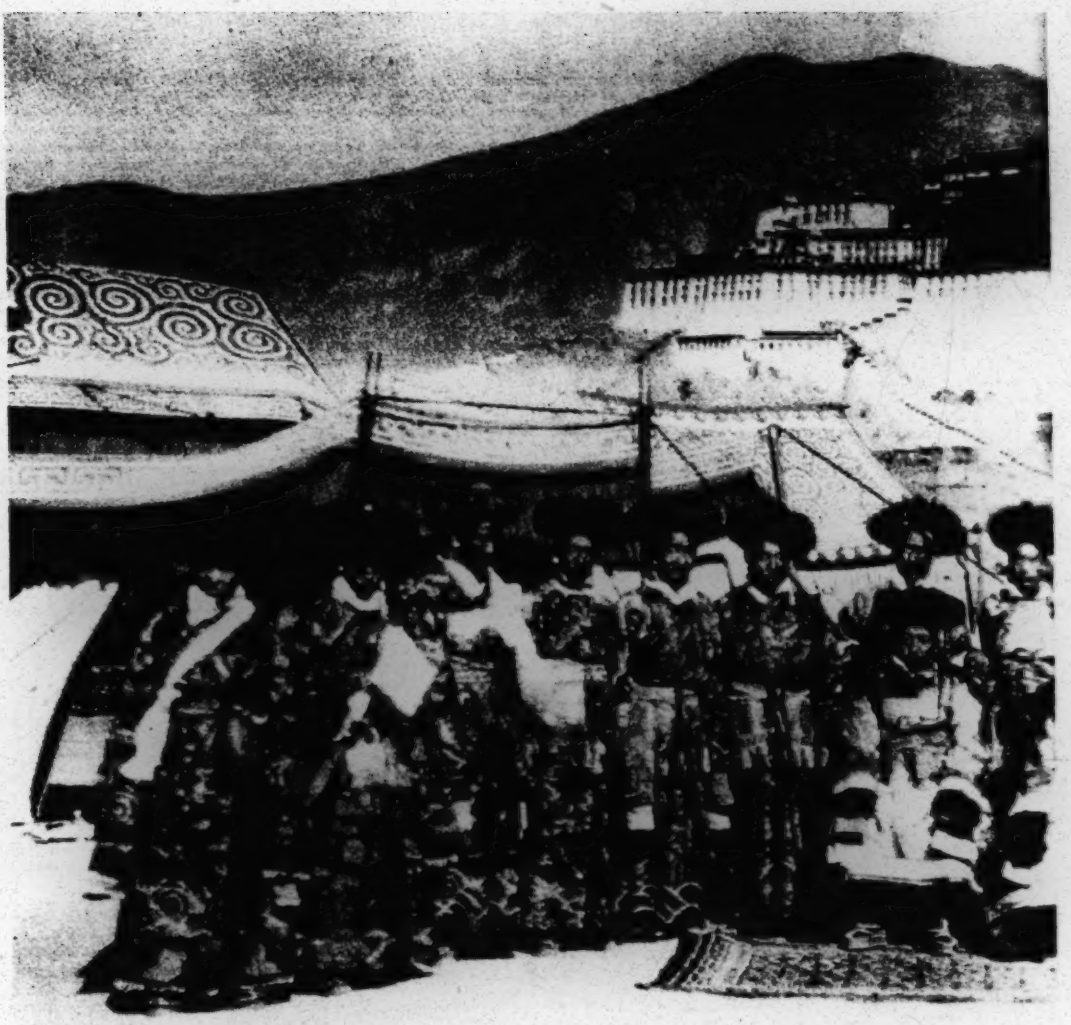

Plate #18- Yosar Officials at New Year's Festival in Lhasa. (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #19- Official General (Commander) Costume for New Year Festival (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography)

Plate #20- Commander costume (robe and collar) for Tibetan New Year (Losar) made of Russian gold silk brocade and velvet with intricate piping pattern. Ming Late (1506-1644) accession #766 (Courtesy of The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton)

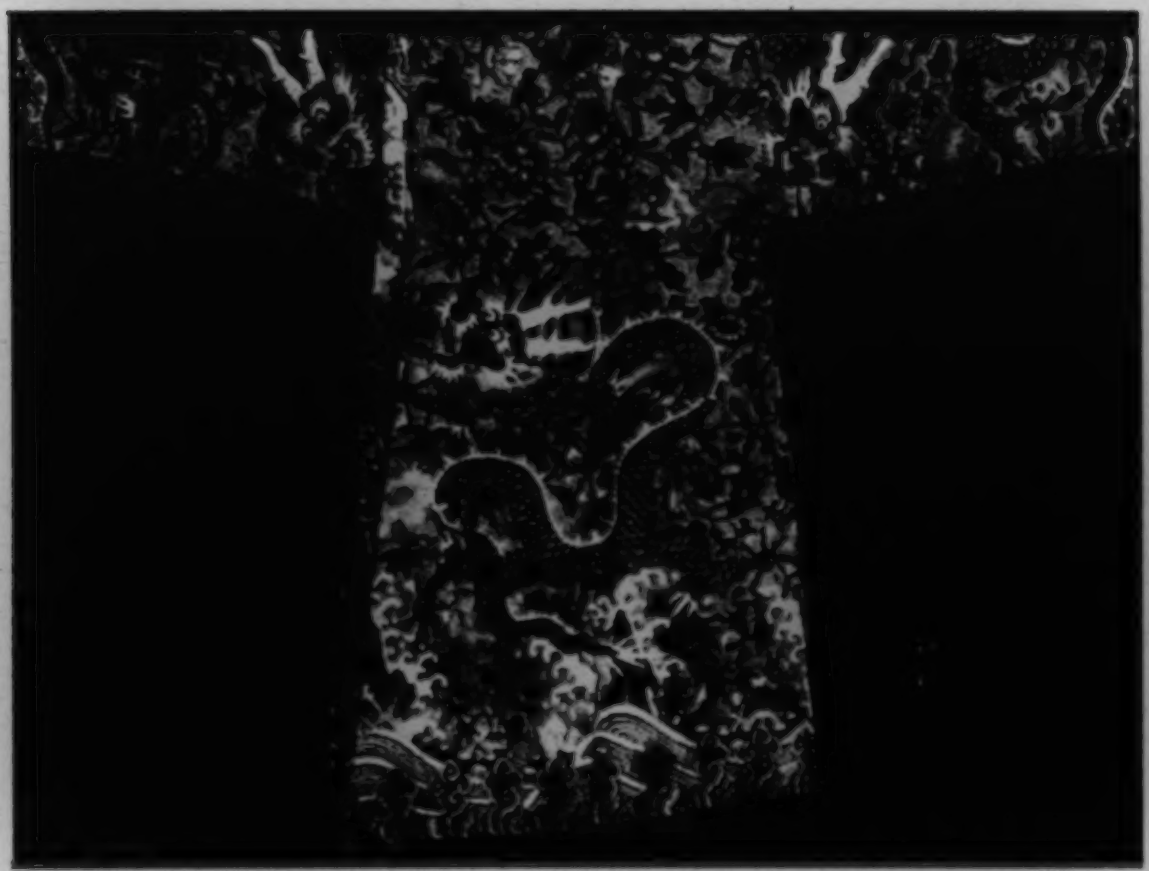

Plate #21- Men's chupa made of Chinese gold silk kusso fabirc for special occasions and celebrations such as Tibetan New Year (Losar). Ming Late (1506-1644) accession # 426 (Courtesy of The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

Plate #22- Men's chupa made of gold Chinese kossu silk with dragon and pheonix symbols late Ming Dynasty (1506-1644) accession #20 (Courtesy of The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

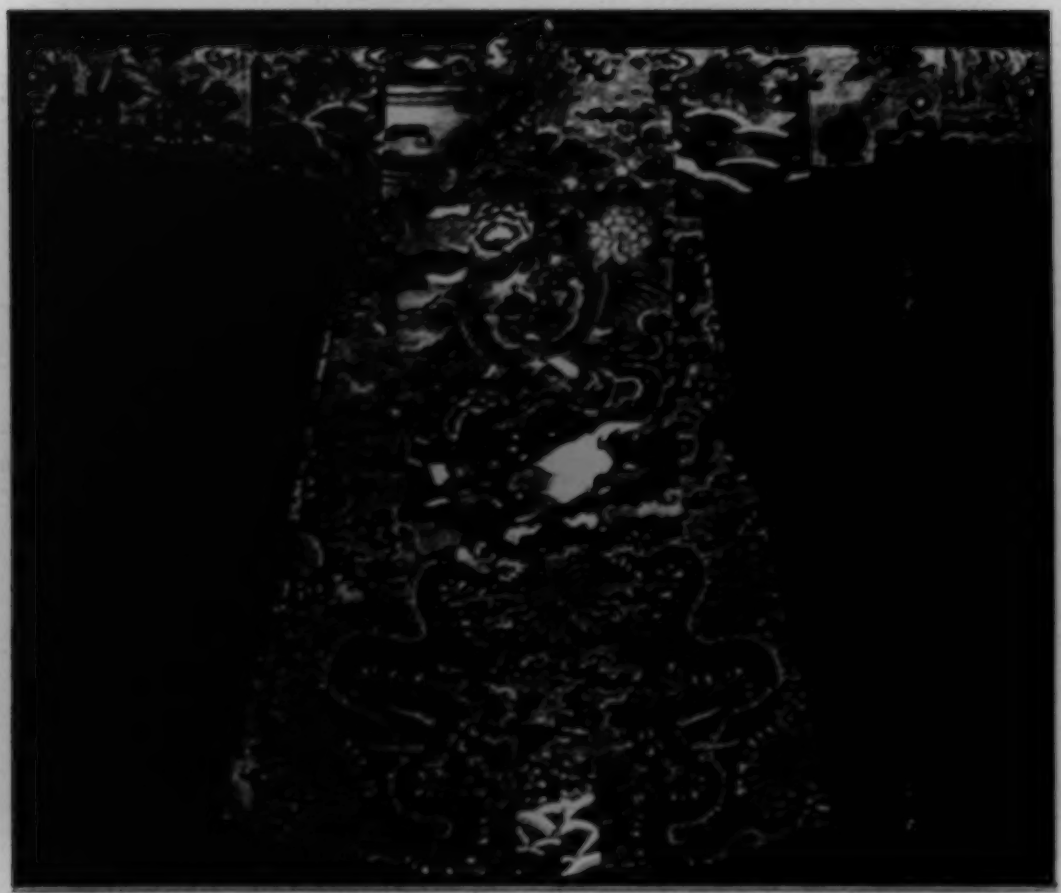

Plate #23- Men's multicoloured chupa made of Chinese kossu silk with dragon and pheonix symbols late Ming Dynasty (1506-1644) accession #21(Courtesy of The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

The next dance in the cycle pays homage to *Yama*, the Lord of the Dead, represented by a huge green mask worn by the chief dancer, the *chojeh* (Duncan, 1964: 148). Slowly circling the ground three times, the *chojeh* and his five attendants whirl and hop on one foot to the accompaniment of the crash of cymbals, the beating of drums, and blaring horns. Next, the *Alaka,* "two pilgrims of the escort of the *Chojeh*," disperse into the crowd to roughhouse and tell "coarse jokes," thus creating comic relief as a respite from the more intense dances. The *Alaka* are not always farcical, they also chant prayers for the dead. The *Atsara*, meantime, a pair of dancers separate from the *chojeh's* retinue, carry on in the spirit of light-heartedness with a parody of Indian Brahman priests (Duncan, 1964: 149).

Thirteen whirling monks with full musical accompaniment then perform the instructive Black Hat Dance, the story of an evil Tibetan king who once terrorized the land and the monk that executed him. The dance exemplifies Tibetan Buddhism's implicit understanding of compassion and forgiveness, which ought not be confused with passivity. By stopping, the tyrant from doing further harm to his people, the reasoning goes, is to stop him from doing more harm to himself. In fact, to kill the king before he kills again is an act of compassion because there is no "motivation to harm or retaliate," photojournalist Philip Borges concludes. The monk's role, therefore, is totally consistent with a tenet of Tibetan Buddhism, which is "to act in a way that will best serve all individuals involved" (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1996: 6). This dance is unique to Tibetan Buddhism reflecting the history of Tibet.

Plate #24- Cham Dancer in costume for ritual dance 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome).

The Black Hat dancers' movements are violent. Each dancer furiously gyrates to outline a huge circle. The dancers then slowly draw to the centre, all the while hopping in unison until the climax – the death of the wicked king. Later, four *Deemoh* dancers embodying the goddesses of immortality exaggerate sexual behaviours as a cautionary tale. For instance, their costumes have dangling white cloth breasts so the dancers can "extend their breasts with their hands," as they dance in a fitful manner (Duncan, 1964: 153). Following the *Deemoh's* hasty exit, a lone *Shawa* 'deer dancer' whirls out with a green cow-faced mask symbolizing a messenger of *Yama*, the Lord of the Dead. The Mactaggart Collection and the Newark Museum have aprons depicting the wrathful deity *Yama* worn by monk dancers in these performances (Plates 25 & 26).

Masks and their depiction of the macabre and grotesque were key components of the year-end ritual to eliminate malevolent spirits (Plates 27, 28, 29, 30 & 31). A *cham* costume in the Newark Museum illustrates a fierce guardian deity's mask and a *rigs lnga*, a tiara comprised of multiple images of the Buddha (Plate 29). Monks also wear headdresses without masks, for instance, the Black Hat Dance is performed with painted faces and a black hat (Norbulingka Institute, Ritual Dancers, 2005 and Tucci, 1988: 128). However, a majority of monk performers wore and continue to wear masks to enact the ritual cycle of dances.

Young monks play a major role in the dance cycle leading up to the start of the Tibetan calendar New Year. Eight monks under the age of sixteen perform *Gatruk*, the Dance of

Plate #25- Yamantaka apron worn by monks for cham dance. (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography).

Plate #26- Yamantaka apron worn by monks for cham dance. Qing Late (1850-1912) accession #374 (Courtesy of The Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

the Youths. In a straight line, the young monks dance "closely resembling that of skeletons," and with great formality with the intent of pleasing the good spirits (Duncan, 1964: 158-159). The *Monlam-cham* or Prayer Dance, closes the cycle and serves to herald the *Monlam Chemno* (the Great Prayer Festival, which begins three days after *Losar*). Marion Duncan refers to *Gudo-cham*, which starts the cycle, as resembling a funeral and the concluding *Monlam-cham* as taking part in a bridal ceremony (Duncan, 1964: 160). The overall mood is more buoyant, joyous and festive than during the inaugural *Gudo-cham*.

Founded by the renowned Buddhist reformer Tsong Khapa in 1409 CE, the *Monlam Chenmo* commemorates the two weeks of miracles performed by the Buddha in India near Shravasti (Thurman, 1996: 35). It is also an overall celebration of the Buddha's spiritual enlightenment. The importance of this festival was reflected in the fact that everyday commerce was suspended in Lhasa, and "the keys of the city were turned over to the monastic abbots" (Thurman, 1996: 35). The *Monlam Chenmo* unfolded over 21 days, and in Lhasa "20,000 to 30,000 monks would participate in sessions of chanting, dancing, religious discourse and philosophical debate" (Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, 2004). The ritual festival was also performed "with local variations, in all parts of Tibet" (Tucci, 1988: 149). An unbroken line of the *Monlam Chenmo* was performed throughout Tibet from 1409 until its suspension in 1960 by the People's Republic of China.

Plate #27- Cham dancers in masked costumes 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome).

Plate #28- Monk dancers in masks 1920's (courtesy of Alexandra David-Neel Foundation, Digne-les-Bains, France).

Plate #29- Monk tunic *ber* has auspicious red and yellow stripes on the triangular sleeves. The costume includes a red wrathful mask worn at ritual dances. (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography).

Plate #30- Monk in mask ready for the dance 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome).

Plate #31- Yamantaka wrathful deity mask (Courtesy of Valrae Reynolds, Tibet a lost world: The Newark Museum Collection of Tibetan Art and Ethnography).

The *cham* dances are an integral component of the *Monlam Chenmo* ritual. Regardless of the community, the festival featured monk dancers in brilliantly embroidered vestments, including elaborate and brilliantly coloured silk brocade tunic robes known as *ber* (Tucci, 1988: 128). The Mactaggart Collection at the University of Alberta has some fine examples of (*ber)* tunic robes that could have been worn during *Monlam Chenmo* (see Plates # 32, 33, 34 & 35). The (*ber)* tunic costumes in the Mactaggart Collection were meticulously constructed with a variety of silk brocades and styles of embroidery. The overall effect of the (*ber)* tunic robe in a dance performance creates a brilliant spectacle of swirling fabric.

Following an absence of a quarter century, the Chinese authorities permitted the *Monlam Chenmo* to resume in 1985, but suspended it once more by 1990, "maybe because the festival encourages Tibetan identity too strongly" (China Tibet Information Center, 2005). Today, the *Monlam Chenmo* is still performed, albeit outside of Tibet's borders. It begins shortly after *Losar* and lasts three days (Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, 2004). In northern India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama presides over the final day of the ceremony in Dharamsala and gives teachings.

The celebration remains an impressive spectacle mindful of its importance. Large butter sculptures are exhibited alongside thousands of butter lamps, which burn throughout the night as testament to the offering of the many pilgrims who travel to partake in the festival. The *Monlam Chenmo* is also celebrated in south India where the three largest Tibetan monastic universities have been re-established. As part of the proceedings of the

Plate #32- Cham dance tunic *ber* with triangular sleeves worn by monks for monastic dance rituals. (Note the auspicious Buddhist yellow and red bands on the *ber* robe). Kangxi (1662-1722) accession #188 (Courtesy of the Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

Plate #33- Cham dance tunic *ber* worn by monks to perform ritual dances. The tunic has large triangular sleeves typical of cham dance costumes with red and yellow auspicious stripes. This costume is made of blue Chinese silk with dragon symbols. Kangxi (1662-1722) accession #196 (Courtesy of the Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

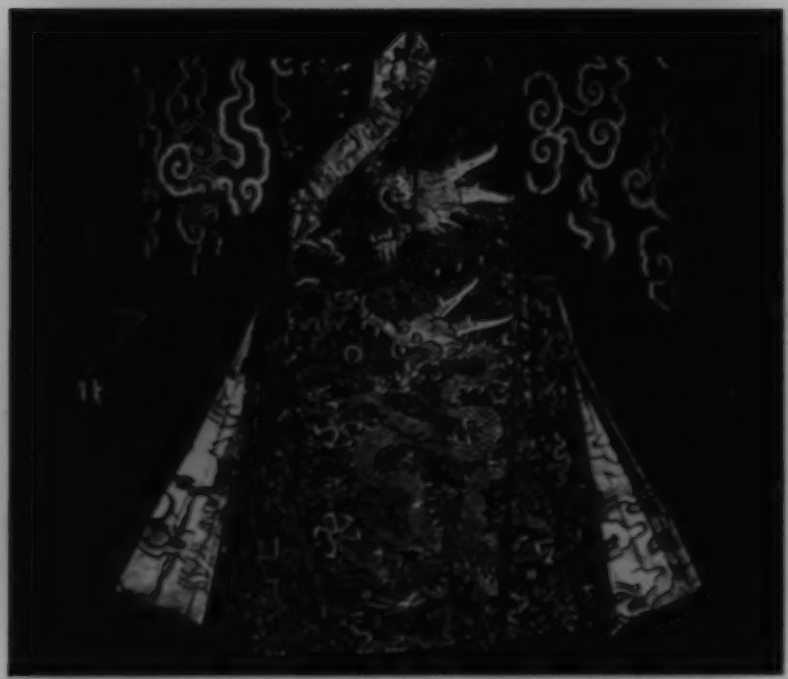

Plate #34- Cham dance tunic *ber* made of dark blue Chinese silk brocade in a Kossu weave with dragon symbols. Kangxi (1662-1722) accession #22 (Courtesy of the Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

Plate #35- Cham dance tunic *ber* made of Chinese silk kossu with large triangular sleeves. Ming Late (1506-1644) accession #177 (Courtesy of the Mactaggart Art Collection, University of Alberta Museums, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada)

festival, *geshe* candidates (akin to doctoral candidates) sit for their final examinations. (Tibet Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, 2004).

The most important festival after *Losar* and the *Monlam Chenmo* (principally a religious event) was the harvest festival, the *Shoton* or Tibetan curd festival featuring the *Yonneh-cham* dance performed around the first half of September (Duncan, 1964: 128). The *Shoton* is now celebrated by Tibetans-in-exile during the spring (Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, 2004). Similar to an annual country fair, the *Shoton* was a lay festival with the *Yonneh-cham* dance as a focal point for Tibetans, who spent days on the dance grounds. Numerous other celebratory dances were performed, as well. One of them, the *Trashee Zhonpa* is composed of six whirling men who are joined by two *JheLuh*, slender males dressed in women's clothing. Historically, there were taboos on female participation to depict Buddhist goddesses taken from the *Ache Lhamo*, Tibetan Opera, classical repertoire.

The *Lingdro Dechen Rolmo* performed by both men and women of the lay community in Tibet was also a Buddhist-inspired dance ritual. Its purpose was to purify, whereby "the dancers literally stamp out negativity and summon prosperity for themselves and the community" (Lerner, 1987: 33). It "resembles Eastern Tibet folk dance," declares Lin Lerner, and then continues "the meditational text which is sung by the dancers contains the most sublime teachings" of Tibetan Buddhism (Lerner, 1987: 32). As a "special ritual dance" the lay performers "were all farmers or herders" costumed in the colourful

brocade robes reminiscent of the Tibetan nobility. The entire ritual and cycle of thirteen dances that comprise the *Lingdro Dechen Rolmo* were completed in a single day.

The *Lingdro Dechen Rolmo* was formally presented on three occasions during the Tibetan calendar year, as part of *Losar* (Tibetan New Year), the celebration of Buddha, and "the time when the monastic community completes its retreat" (Lerner, 1987: 34).

TIBETAN NUNS ON TOUR: PERFORMING BUDDHISM

Tours of nuns facilitate a cultural exchange with Western audiences unfamiliar with Tibetan Buddhist dance and performance. The tours also raise money to help rebuild the Tibetan Buddhist community living in India and Nepal.

Women have had a strong interest in Buddhist-practice, however, it was uncommon in Tibet for them to participate as nuns in the monastic tradition. In the decades following the PRC takeover, many women from poor families fled Tibet. Several arrived in Katmandu, Nepal, determined to practice their religion. Lama Yeshe had already established Kopan Monastery near Katmandu in 1969, and he invited women to study alongside the monks at the monastery in 1982, which was "quite a revolutionary proposal at the time" (Kopan Monastery, 2005). The nuns later founded the nunnery *Khachoe Ghakyil Ling*, which by 1994 built its own nunnery below the Kopan Monastery. At last count, 290 nuns are housed and study there (Kopan Monastery, 2005).

The nuns of *Khachoe Ghakyil Ling* raise funds to support their nunnery through dance and cultural performance. Fundraising tours abroad are not uncommon. The nuns have been welcomed at prestigious venues such as the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Their performance at the Kaufmann Theatre in 1999 included music, dance, and a demonstration of formal Tibetan Buddhist debate (Orenstein, 2002: 213).

The nuns are part of the Tibetan community living in exile, the *Khachoe Ghakyil Ling* nuns are unusual in that they have learned to perform the religious dances that were once the exclusive preserve of male monks. For example, during their 1999 tour in the United States, a nun performed The Dance of the Wisdom Sword "to overcome negativity" (Orenstein, 2002). Other male Buddhist practices, such as Chu Chanting a chanted prayer from an 11th century purification ritual have been performed by the nuns. The most overtly theatrical piece performed by the nuns in 1999 was a masked-dance based on the life of Milarepa, a Tibetan Buddhist saint.

While fundraising is a focus of these tours, the nuns can also expand their horizons by experiencing another culture. Through chanting, they broadcast Buddha's teachings farther a-field. This type of cross-cultural encounter is a new development for Tibetan nuns and that is not all that has changed for these women. Tsenla, a founding member of the *Khachoe Ghakyil Ling* nunnery, acknowledged she is not a traditional nun in that she is performing monk dances and chants. In this respect, the nunnery is making headway for women in Tibetan spiritual practice (Orenstein, 2002: 214). In her own experience, Tsenla confirms that it is much more difficult to raise money for nunneries than for

monasteries. She concluded that new opportunities for nuns are partly the result of the ongoing interaction and dialogue between the West and Tibetans-in-exile (Orenstein, 2002: 215). Tibetan performance in a Western context also creates the conditions for the ongoing presentation, representation and preservation of traditional Tibetan culture.

TIBETAN MONKS ON TOUR: PERFORMING BUDDHISM

In 1988, and for the first time, monks from the *Drepung Loseling* monastery in India embarked on a world tour. The Mystical Arts of Tibet: Sacred Music and Sacred Dance for World Peace tour was jointly sponsored by the Canada Tibet Friendship Society and Richard Gere of Tibet House in New York City. The eight Tibetan Buddhist monks traveled for over a year, performing masked dance coupled with traditional monastic music in halls and concert venues. In all, the monks performed in 130 cities throughout Europe and North America (Jessop, 2002: 2).

The *Drepung Loseling* monks' tour of 1988 included a stop in Edmonton, Alberta. The first tour was deemed a success and has been remounted several times. The monks, returned to Alberta in 1991, which was coordinated and hosted by the International Buddhist Friends Association of Edmonton (personal conversation, Justine Janus-Miguel, 2005). In 2000, the monks accepted another invitation to perform in Edmonton during *The Mystical Arts of Tibet*, a major exhibit at the Provincial Museum & Archives (Provincial Museum & Archives, 2003). The exhibit included personal sacred objects of

The Dalai Lama, ancient artifacts from the surviving collection of the Drepung Loseling Monastery, and contemporary pieces made by Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal demonstrating the continuation of Tibetan tradition.

The *Drepung Loseling* monk's tour in 2000, their sixth world tour, was led by Za Choeje Rinpoche, a prominent instructor at the Drepung Loseling Institute, which is affiliated with Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a highly regarded specialist in *tantra*, the mystical arts of Tibetan Buddhism. The relatively young lama, who was born in a refugee camp in India in 1968 supervised performances of the traditional Tibetan monastic dance repertoire. This included the Dance of the Celestial Travelers, the Snow Lion Dance, Dance of the Skeleton Lords and the Dance of the Black Hat Masters.

In all their tours, the monks have worn rich brocade costumes. They performed multiphonic chanting, in which "the body is transformed into an efficient overtone amplifier," and played, "traditional temple instruments such as cymbals, bells, drums, long horn trumpets and high horns" (Jessop, 2002: 5).

The *Drepung Loseling* monks have had three objectives for their tours. "The first," according to Za Choeje Rinpoche, " is sharing our culture – sacred arts, sacred music, sacred dance. The second is to seek support for our culture, which is highly endangered by the Chinese." The third objective is "to raise financial support for Tibetans-in-exile" (Graham, 1998).

Other Tibetan monastic orders, such as monks from the re-established *Ganden Jangtse* monastery in south India have also toured North America. In 1993, these monks visited Edmonton, Alberta, their performance captured in a film, which stated "they have come to the West seeking assistance, and to perform sacred rituals and purification" (Hill, 1995). The film details the *Ganden Jangtse* monks' performance of the Black Hat Dance, and in a companion film shows the monks constructing an intricate sand *mandala* (Hill, 1995). What once took days to make or perform is sometimes completed in hours in a "streamlined version" which "has been designed to maintain the essential integrity and purpose of each of the individual pieces performed" (McCartin, 2000). It is not uncommon for the *Ganden Jangtse* monks, for instance, to adapt their performance to accommodate immediate circumstances, "yet remain faithful to the intent of the tradition" (personal conversation, Don Hill, 2005).

TIBETAN OPERA (ACHE LHAMO)

Tibetans have great fondness for *Ache Lhamo*, the traditional opera of Tibet, which they regard "as an enduring symbol of their unique cultural identity" (Calkowski, 1991: 646). The Tibetan Opera tradition "evolved from a Buddhist storytelling genre," whereby, a traveling bard "presented tales by unrolling scrolls that depicted popular narratives" (Foley & Karter, 1988: 131).). Tibetan Opera *Ache Lhamo* is secular theatre, "since the ritual *cham* dances are the incandescent meeting point between religion and performance" (Attisani, 1999: 9). Virtually uninterrupted since the 8th century CE, the Tibetan Opera as a secular performance theatre "has the unique distinction of being the

oldest living theatre in the world" (Attisani, 1999: 1). Actors were recruited from the monastic and lay communities, and "by the 19th century every district in Tibet had a resident troupe, which performed locally and once a year in the capital Lhasa" (Conservancy for Tibetan Art & Culture, 2005). Today, there are two major companies of Tibetan Opera, one in Lhasa under the auspices of the People's Republic of China, and the other in Dharmsala, northern India.

Lhamo means 'goddess,' which understandably might presume female actors, however "the genre was traditionally performed by all-male troupes" (Foley & Karter, 1988: 131). The *Ache Lhamo* canon tells stories of female entrapment and magical release, the principle character presided over by a clowning hunter or trickster-like fisherman. It follows a formula of "female spirit-medium-dancer" and the "male shaman-clown who guides her trance while simultaneously entertaining the gathered viewers" (Foley & Karter, 1988: 131). The formal structure of presentation of *Ache Lhamo* grew from "what started off as pantomime" and subsequently "evolved into a structured display of song, dance and narration" (Norbulingka Institute, 2005).

Ache Lhamo features choreographed "step-hops," and specific turns with one leg "crooked in front, and fluid rotations of the wrists," all the while in masked performance (Foley & Karter, 1988: 133). The strict choreography also signals and can only be assigned to specific characters in the Tibetan Opera, while musical accompaniment – thumping drums and clanging cymbals – amplifies the emotional content of the unfolding drama. A maxim of *Ache Lhamo*, "the rhythm of the drum dictates the style of the

dance," underlines the importance of the beat (Ross, 1995: 44). Monastic dance choreography was equally strict and structured with characters played by monks only "with the right attitude, a pure heart and devotional feelings" (Ross, 1995: 43).

Ache Lhamo human characters generally are unmasked, with the exception of the Hunter and Fisherman. They wear two-dimensional masks in the drama, alongside "the gods" who have a highly stylized look, "while animal and demon visages are more three-dimensional" (Foley & Karter 1988: 133). In *Ache Lhamo*, actors wear opulent, brocade costumes. Female characters don Tibetan headdresses and jewelry, such as an amulet charm box, and coral and turquoise beads. Tibetan women's dress includes a *wonchu* blouse with long sleeves, the *chupa* over-dress, and the apron with gold corners. Nomadic dress is also a feature of *Ache Lhamo*. In the *Doasammo*, an oft-told narrative in the Tibetan Opera repertoire, there are comical scenes, which feature a herdsman and his wife costumed in nomad-style clothing (Foley & Karter 1988: 137). Traditionally the role of the nomad's wife was played by a man, but after 1949 and the People's Republic of China's 'liberation' of Tibet, women could take to the stage and play female characters.

There are ten major stories in the *Ache Lhamo* repertoire. All are rooted in Buddhist tales from India, as well as Tibetan historical and religious events (Plates 36, 37, 38 & 39). The history of the Tibetan people is a going concern. "Today, we are going through a critical period of time," His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama declared on his website. "We are a nation with an ancient culture, which is now facing extinction" (Official Website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004). This statement reflects the Tibetans-in-exile

preoccupation with cultural survival and the preservation of Tibetan culture through the arts.

As one of the first official acts of the Tibetan government-in-exile, His Holiness the Dalai Lama established *The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts* (TIPA) shortly after arriving in India in 1959. Within months, steps were taken to "keep the culture alive" by preserving Tibetan performing arts so that they will not be lost nor forgotten (Official Website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004). The primary intent of TIPA has been and remains the accurate and faithful presentation of the *Ache Lhamo* (see Appendix, Tibetan Dances) (Calkowski, 1991: 645). As cultural ambassadors, TIPA has been the symbol of the 'official' voice of Tibetan art and performance. Regardless, Attisani contends that there is a need to build a new Tibetan culture based on positive interaction with the west. TIPA has benefited from frequent tours abroad, he says, and cites as evidence exchanges with actors, directors, and scholars from other countries. TIPA members, therefore, are considered to be better prepared to carry on the tradition of the *Ache Lhamo* (Attisani, 1999: 5).

TIPA is a modest-sized institution with an enrollment of just over one hundred full-time students, instructors and administration. Former Tibetan Opera stars, musicians schooled in the folk song tradition, alongside artists and the craftspeople who make props, construct wardrobe and maintain musical instruments, as well as technical staff collaborate with students to authentically stage *Ache Lhamo* repertoire. The students also receive direction from monks, expert in the performance of sacred monastic dance.

Plate #36- Tibetan Opera (Lhamo) costumes with opera mask (courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta 2005).

Plate #37- Tibetan Opera (Lhamo) masked performer (courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta 2005).

Plate #38- Lhamo Tibetan Opera Performance at Gyantse 1940's (in Guiseppe Tucci, To Lhasa and Beyond, courtesy of Instituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Rome).

Plate #39- Tibetan Institute of the Performing Arts (Lhamo) performers performing in opera 2005. (Courtesy of TIPA Tibetan Institute of the Performing Arts, Dharmsala, India).

In Dharamsala, TIPA is a point of pride for the Tibetan community in exile. *Ache Lhamo* performance brings the diaspora together. It's a social event as well as a spiritual one, a time for both family outings such as picnics and formal "meetings between lay and religious people" (Attisani, 1999: 2). The challenge has been to keep the younger generation engaged in this social and cultural event. They are increasingly attracted to "contemporary culture" and consider the tradition of *Ache Lhamo* "as something belonging to the older generations that will die out with them" (Attisani, 1999: 2).

In Tibet, the People's Republic of China has made the presentation of *Ache Lhamo* a model for the representation of Chinese 'folk art' in the region. Simply put, Chinese authorities have declared "Tibetan Dance Drama" as merely one of China's countless cultural folk entertainments. His Holiness the Dalai Lama disagrees in principle. "Our culture is one of the heritages of the world." Its integrity as a unique tradition, he implies, should not be tampered with. "Protecting an ancient culture like this is a responsibility not only of the concerned nation, but also the world community as a whole" (Official Website of the Central Tibetan Administration, 2004). What constitutes authentic *Ache Lhamo* and who has the right to claim 'official' status as the voice of the Tibetan Opera tradition are hotly contested by the People's Republic of China and the Tibetan government-in-exile.

In the years following the demise of the Cultural Revolution, which ended in 1976, officials in China admitted that the 'Tibetan problem' had been mishandled (Mackerras, 1988: 199). How the wrongs of cultural suppression in Tibet would be righted was

foreshadowed in a telling article written by Zhong Shuzhi, an author and arts journalist in Beijing. Calling it "A New Tibetan Dance Drama," Shuzhi described how by 1979, a well-known epic in the *Ache Lhamo* canon had been freely adapted by writers and performers who "utilized traditional Tibetan art forms, both in the songs and dances." However, the utility of the original title The Story of King Gesar was problematic and consequently was banned. To the Tibetan people inside Tibet, who knew the story well, the epic tale might prove a signal, since the king "rallies his generals and soldiers to fight to safeguard his people." So The Story of King Gesar was reworked, restaged and renamed "*Off to Battle*," and then declared an aide "for the development of Chinese folk art" in the region" (Shuzhi, 1979: 112).

A new policy on Tibet enacted in May 1980, "called for the development of Tibetan customs and culture, including religion and the arts, and for giving real teeth to the doctrine of autonomy". This policy looked promising on paper but in practice the spirit of the proclamation was not universally applied (Mackerras, 1988: 199). For example, novices in Amdo territory (the birthplace of the current Dalai Lama) looking for religious instruction at monasteries in TAR "are not allowed entry into monastery colleges in central Tibet. They are told by the Chinese authorities that they are not 'Tibetans' and sent away" (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1996: 3). That the novices no longer qualify as Tibetan is a peculiarity of the political map in that Amdo was annexed to China and its territory renamed Quinghai province. However, as Shuzhi reported, the Qinghai National Dance Drama Troupe has a reputation for performing "A New Tibetan Dance Drama" which arranges its libretto from *Ache Lhamo*, the 'national' theatre of Tibet. Thus, a

paradox: Qinghai officially apart from Tibet is considered at certain times to be a part of Tibetan culture.

The *Zhongguo baike nianjian* 1984 (Chinese encyclopedic yearbook 1984) clarified the PRC's stewardship of Tibet's national dance and drama repertoire. The encyclopedia's entry authorizes that "the collection of libretti of the eight great Tibetan music dramas is essentially complete, and there are also five great traditional Tibetan music dramas which are being salvaged, rearranged, processed and restaged" (Lui et al, 1984: 84). In a 1996 interview "The Realpolitik of Spirituality," His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, "Whether intentionally or unintentionally, some kind of cultural genocide is taking place," in his homeland. "Time is running out," he warned. "I believe my responsibility is to save Tibet's unique cultural heritage" (Thurman, 1996).

Chinese authorities also claim this responsibility, "As a strategy to demonstrate its enlightened sovereignty to the international community," anthropologist Charlene Makley remarked in "Performing Authenticity," a 1997 review of a touring Tibetan Opera company. She contended that "the Chinese government now claims to protect Tibetan religion and creative forms of expression, and points to the modernization efforts of recent years as evidence that Tibetans are happy to be part of the "great family of the Chinese state" (Makley, 1997).

"Since the early 1990s, exchanges in the area of folk culture have occupied an important position in China's foreign cultural exchange programs," declared Zhao Xingtian, the

director of the Comprehensive Planning Section under the Bureau for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. His article in the *Beijing Review* headlined "Cultural Exchanges Flourish in 1995" reflect the PRC's position by taking particular notice of "The Tibetan Song and Dance Ensemble's recent tour of Canada and the United States," which "was highly acclaimed by audiences and the press" (Xingtian, 1996: 18).

Attention has been drawn to the veracity of troupes from inside China, who proclaim their performance on the international stage "as the essence of an unchanged Tibetan culture." In 1997, a TIPA official complained, "The time for cheating Western audiences is gone." In their view, the portrayal by Lhasa-based 'opera' should not be considered authentic *Ache Lhamo*. Makley documented the '*sinicization*' of the presentation of *Ache Lhamo* by a Lhasa-based touring company "in the form of ballet-like acrobatic movements, high-pitched falsetto singing of Peking Opera, and the rearrangement of plot and lyrics to reflect Chinese themes and nationalist propaganda" (Makley, 1997).

In 1991, Calkowski contended that the *Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts* in Dharmasala was the only professional troupe presenting authentic *Ache Lhamo*, whereas the Lhasa-based Tibetan Opera with its new arrangements, musical instruments and vocal styles had "radically altered" the genre (Calkowski, 1991: 646). A TIPA official acknowledged that modern stagecraft can enhance appreciation of *Ache Lhamo* – especially in its appeal to the young – however, "we feel that TIPA [must] take that modernization in the right direction." Makley adds, in her summation "these performances are inseparable from the fierce struggles with the Chinese state over the

ability to display and control what is "authentic" Tibetan culture." She concludes that the stakes of this struggle over authenticity must be seen in the context of two competing nationalisms. One is backed by the immense and powerful Chinese state apparatus fueled by recent market reforms. The other is embattled and stateless, attempting to maintain its appeal to Tibetan youth growing up in diaspora within the larger Hindi and Euro-American culture (Makley, 1997).

Tibetans living abroad are concerned about cultural preservation and conservation. The Tibetan government-in-exile states its prime objective is both to protect and to accurately present Tibetan culture. The PRC, meantime, in its cultural exchange programs abroad, claims the authority to represent Tibetan culture as part of its Chinese ethnic minorities. The debate is ongoing and is beyond a mere difference of opinion. Tibetans living in exile are suspicious of the intentions of the Chinese government, just as People's Republic of China officials are wary of their counterparts in Dharamsala.

There is also a struggle of coming to terms with modernity inside the Tibetan diaspora. Jamyang Norbu, a senior scholar and writer on Tibetan art and culture has noted that "in the exile Tibetan world even a moderately progressive position runs up against the conservatism of the older generation and the church, as well as the whimsies of western 'dharma types' enamoured with everything 'traditional' or 'mystical' in Tibet." Norbu's observation is particularly significant because of his authority as one-time director of TIPA from 1979 to 1984 (Norbu, 2005: 1).

All of these issues – the presentation and authentic representation of Tibetan culture – concern the Tibetan-Canadian women I studied in Calgary. While they are inspired by the Dharamsala Tibetan government-in-exile and use TIPA as their model for creating traditional costumed dance performance, they also struggle as modern women in Canada to preserve, protect, and promote their culture.

CALGARY TIBETAN WOMEN

TIBETAN IN ALBERTA

In 1971, Tibetans first began settling in southern Alberta. Over time many migrated to the city of Calgary, where as many as170 members of the diaspora constitute the major Tibetan-Canadian community in Alberta.

Calgary, nestled in the grassland foothills with the Rocky Mountains along the western horizon, is a familiar landscape to the Tibetan people. Alberta with its wide-open spaces and mountains has a familiar look that appeals to Tibetan people. Since the 1990s, for example, a Tibetan Bazaar held in the city of Edmonton draws Tibetan-Canadians from Calgary and from other points in western Canada where Tibetans-in-exile have settled. The Tibetans come to sell their arts and crafts, trade gossip, and perform at the annual fall event in September.

The older members of the Alberta Tibetan community, as immigrant refugees, made the greatest adjustment in adapting to Canadian society. However, mature members of the community still regard Tibet as their lost homeland. Tibetans-in-exile are keen to hold on to their Buddhist beliefs, values, and practices. Younger Tibetans born in Canada are encouraged by their families to make an effort to maintain their Tibetan language and culture. Religious festivals and national celebrations, such as *Losar*, the Tibetan calendar New Year, usually held in the third week of February, are celebrated.

Traditionally, Tibetans celebrated *Losar* in their homeland over a two-week period with opulent ceremonies and ritual monk dances. In the Canadian context, the celebration has been reduced to a single weekend event – neither the *cham* or monk ritual dances are formally presented. However, the Tibetan New Year celebration remains a focal cultural point for many Tibetan-Canadians in Calgary. Indeed, some celebrate the event by traveling to northern India, joining His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala for the New Year celebrations.

Religion typically infuses even the most modest cultural occasion. A Tibetan Buddhist monk, for instance, will typically lead the Tibetan-Canadian community in an invocation before an event begins, akin to singing the national anthem before a special sporting event. It is also common to have the same monk attend private functions in the community at social gatherings where good friends have fun together. However, Tibetan-Canadians take their religion seriously. Many have shrines in their homes as aids to practice their Buddhist faith.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is still regarded by many Tibetan-Canadians as their religious and temporal leader. In the spring of 2004, His Holiness traveled to Vancouver, Toronto and Ottawa, to give talks and meet with government officials. The visit was a major event for the Tibetan-Canadian community. Several of the Calgary women included in the study organized their vacation-time to attend special teachings given by His Holiness in Toronto. It was not unlike a pilgrimage, a rare opportunity to receive blessings and religious instruction.

MY EXPERIENCE OF CALGARY TIBETANS

In the early 1980's, I was introduced to the Tibetan-Canadian community in southern Alberta. Soon after, I attended cultural and religious events, which facilitated a deep and lasting friendship with Tibetans, particularly in Calgary and later, in Edmonton. Lama Kaldan, a *geshe* 'monk scholar' who taught frequently in Calgary, embodied many of the principles of Buddhist practice. The story of his escape from Tibet and eventual arrival in southern Alberta is worth repeating. When His Holiness fled Lhasa in 1959, trekking across the Himalayan mountain range in what proved to be a death march for thousands of his followers, Lama Kaldan was among the estimated eighty thousand who survived the trip.

Lama Kaldan was also among the first wave of Tibetans-in-exile that immigrated to Canada in 1971. Settled by the Canadian government in southern Alberta, Lama Kaldan worked on a sugar beet farm in Taber, Alberta. After gaining a foothold in his new

country, he relocated to Edmonton and worked as an orderly in a hospital. As a participant in Lobsang Dargyay's 1988 study on "Tibetans in Alberta and their Cultural Identity," Lama Kaldan spoke many times of how he missed his homeland and his teacher, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. His struggle to establish himself reflected the difficult adjustments that many Tibetan refugees experienced in Canada at the time. Now another generation – Tibetan-Canadians born in this country – face another struggle to maintain their language and culture.

In 1994, I attended a Tibetan wedding in Calgary. The attributes of the Tibetan ceremony, I soon learned, did not match my Western expectations of how a wedding is usually performed. The bride and groom's families were sitting in the hall casually drinking tea when I noticed that some sort of ceremony was taking place on the stage. The 'stage' was not a formal requirement, but rather a feature of the hall that was rented for the occasion. I began to ask questions about what was unfolding on the stage. If it had not been for Lama Kaldan, who informed me about the proceedings, I would not have known that the couple had just been married right before my very eyes! It was by all accounts a casual, seemingly informal matter between the bride and groom. This seemed to be an acknowledgement of an agreement of some sort made well in advance – the reason for this celebration. My husband, my children, Lama Kaldan, and everyone else in the hall, then congratulated the newly married couple. And, indeed, a festive time was had by all, which was more in keeping with my Western expectations.

That Tibetan wedding customs are different from Western exchanges of matrimonial vows is self-evident. However, they are no less important to Tibetan-Canadians and their families with a unique Tibetan matrimonial structure associated with these ceremonies. A structure that was not apparent to me at first but I learned to identify the subtle cues over the years.

In December 2003, I attended a house party in Calgary celebrating the arrival of a traveling Tibetan *rinpoche*, an accomplished Buddhist lama. During the party, a few Tibetan-Canadian women sequestered themselves for a short time to practice dances for an upcoming performance. I was invited to watch them rehearse. I noted how their costumes and dances were quite different from traditional outfits and performances that I had seen by Ukrainian, Polish, and Hawaiian folk dancers. Indeed, I was fascinated by the Tibetan women's dance in their traditional costume, and how it underlined a substantive difference between Tibetan and Western-style of dress and dance. I also recognized that the Tibetan-Canadian women in Calgary and their dance group constituted a unique cultural expression within Canada. Later, I asked the dance group's organizer and a community leader about the possibility of studying these Tibetan-Canadian women in their costumed dance performance. They both responded positively. The dance group's leader, on behalf of the women, accorded a willingness to participate in a research project on Tibetan culture.

THE DANCE GROUP

Tibet Canada Women's Foundation

In October 2003, the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group was organized to raise funds for cultural projects important to their community. One of its first initiatives was a 'fashion show' of Tibetan costumes in dance performance, as part of an event to raise awareness of Tibet and Tibetan culture.

An organizer known to be quite active in the Tibetan-Canadian community spearheaded the Foundation. She frequently takes time away from work in Calgary to raise funds for Tibetan causes, such as the Himalayan Refugee and Orphanage Project, traveling to Dharamsala and other Tibetan refugee communities established in the years following the failed 1959 uprising in Tibet. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has acknowledged the efforts of the organizer of the Tibet Women's Foundation. She has been very supportive of my study, facilitating interviews, helping with schedules, and explaining the elusive details of costumed dance performance.

Eight members of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation perform Tibetan dances at cultural functions. The dancers were observed at rehearsals, during 'on stage' performances and at social gatherings. A total of eight interviews were conducted between September 2004 and January 2005. Costumes and dances were photographed as a record for the research, providing a visual aid to understand Tibetan dress and dance. In my study, the participants are identified with letters. Full names have not been used in order to maintain confidentiality (Appendix, Human Ethics Research Board).

Social Gatherings

In September 2004, I drove down to Calgary for dinner at Ts.' (organizer) home. She wore a Lhasa dress with *chupa* (dress), a *wonchu* (blouse) and apron, which left me with an impression that Tibetan-Canadian women might tend to wear Tibetan-style dress while in the home. I also met her mother, who decades before escaped Tibet by hiking overland and through the mountains to northern India, a mature woman older than her years. She, too, wore traditional dress: the *wonchu*, a *chupa*, and *pangdhen* apron.

There were other guests, such as the organizer's friends from the Tibetan-Canadian community in Calgary, who were preparing supper in the kitchen. However, these three were in western dress befitting the occasion. If I had been a 'teacher,' things might have been different. I later learned that Tibetans-in-exile who have access to the traditional dress of their former homeland wear it out of respect for visiting lama teachers.

Ts. and I discussed her plans to expand the repertoire for the dance group. She described how the women volunteered their time, and therefore why it would take time to build the dance repertoire. Her plans included more costumes for the performers. However, there was a limit on how much she could afford. The costume construction costs could be formidable for the women, especially given that the overall intent of the dance group was to raise funds for Tibetan refugee orphanages in India. At this time, her main concern was to keep costs down. Later, I would meet Ts.' friend, a board member of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation. He had recently helped her organize a cultural evening of

costumed dance performance at the University of Calgary. He confirmed there was interest and general support for the women's dance presentations in Calgary.

Ts. was also hosting a visiting Buddhist teacher that month – a *rinpoche*. When I visited her home again, Tibetan-Canadians were waiting to visit with the high lama. There was discussion about his itinerary, a planned trip to Toronto, and community events in Calgary initiated by the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation. People were excited.

Nearing eight o'clock in the evening, Ts' mother was still preparing dinner. There were three large pots of Tibetan food simmering on the stove (large restaurant-sized pots seemed to be their preference). I offered to help in the kitchen. In her limited English, she declined my offer. The pleasant spicy smell of the food in preparation was complemented by incense burning in the room next door. I volunteered, instead, to set the table buffet-style with not much else happening for a long while. I got the sense the guests were waiting for something, or someone, so I asked Ts. about the dinner arrangements. She explained that the *rinpoche,* a Buddhist monk, had to be served first as a sign of respect. He was busy ministering to another guest. That's why things were held up, she said. More time passed. Eventually someone – a woman dressed in traditional clothing – brought the *rinpoche* his meal, so the other guests could begin to eat.

A few months later, I visited Ts. at her new home living with her mother who after my arrival emerged from the shrine room, a designated room set aside for contemplation and prayer. Her mother was repeating prayers with her *mani* wheel, a handheld device

comprised of a small canister and a long stick, with a short chain and a small ball at the end of it. The *mani* 'prayer wheel' is activated by a repetitive flick of the wrist, which propels the ball and chain in tandem with the canister, in a circular motion. Short written prayers or *mantras* as they are called are contained inside the canister. The purpose of the device (as I was told) is to intensify the affect of the prayers.

Tibetan-Canadians were coming over for dinner again, and this time I helped her mother prepare supper. This time, she gratefully accepted my offer of assistance. One of the guests, Tin., a former Tibetan monk, was interested in my research – especially its focus on costumed dance performance. He told me about a collector of Tibetan artifacts, a fellow he met in New Delhi years earlier. The collector was keen at that time to acquire authentic Tibetan dress. The monk concluded that this was an early indication of worldwide interest in things Tibetan.

Ten., a visiting university student, was also keen to talk about Tibetan culture as expressed by the diaspora community in India. It was very different, he said, than what he had witnessed in Canada. He was also curious to learn why I, a western woman in Canada, would invest so much time and energy into an investigation of Tibetan dress and dance focusing on a stateless people like himself. I explained that I *intuitively* felt that my task was worthwhile and he seemed satisfied with my response.

Ten. emphasized that in order to understand Tibetan dress and dance in Canada, I would have to study and compare the expression of his culture in the other host countries that

took in Tibetan refugees. He described how it was more acceptable for women to wear Tibetan national dress on a daily basis in India than in Canada. Holidays in India, for instance, allow for Tibetan Buddhist celebrations such as *Losar*, the Tibetan New Year. It was easier, he said, and more acceptable to mark the occasion. I was impressed with his grasp of the global situation for Tibetans-in-exile.

After dinner, the Tibetan women held a rehearsal in the basement. The women bantered affectionately in Tibetan. There was a lot of laughter. One of the women later confided the rehearsals served as an excuse to get together and enjoy each other's company. The mature dancers taught the younger women the intricacies of Tibetan dance steps syncopated with their hand movements. Children were also in attendance watching their mother's rehearse, their behaviour gently scolded from time-to-time if things got out of hand. They spoke to their children in Tibetan. The adult males, meantime, were upstairs talking and socializing.

The women rehearsed with prerecorded Tibetan music imported from India humming to the tunes as they practiced. The women danced for approximately two hours, but their activity was punctuated by long breaks with *chai* tea heavily laced with spice (which is quite good!), lots of laughter, gossip, and good will. Because it was a midweek rehearsal, things broke up around nine o'clock.

I left Ts.' that night, returning to Edmonton with Ten., the student, whom I offered to drive back to the University of Alberta. During the three-hour ride, he talked about his

life as a "stateless person" in India and how different it was there from life here in Canada. While Ten. was enamored with Canada, he felt it was much easier to practice his faith in India, simply because India was the birthplace of Buddhism. He strongly suggested that I visit India to more fully understand Buddhist faith and tradition.

Ten.' conversation that night prompted me to think how Tibetans-in-exile had to adapt to many different physical, social and political environments. He spoke passionately, yet in a quiet and direct manner that revealed his passion about how important cultural survival is for Tibetans-in-exile. This was not an abstract concept for Ten. nor was it mere philosophy late in the night (and it was late traveling down the road). It was a genuine issue affecting his life. "After all, I'm a stateless person," he said. He amplified his point by describing how difficult it was to travel on a 'refugee status' visa. It is a dilemma many Tibetans-in-exile face when traveling abroad. Citizenship and immigration are important issues for Tibetans, and talking with Ten. made me think about their global situation.

Rehearsals

I attended rehearsals at Ts.' with the dancers and choreographer. The dancers paid particular attention to getting the hand gestures just right, working them in such a way to create graceful flowing movements as they turned. The music was repeated over and over to get the rhythm and beat of the dance steps just right. From my observations, the rhythm of the tightly choreographed steps is quite challenging. An observer might think the moves were simple, however, they are anything but simple.

The choreographer was quite firm. Before immigrating to Canada in the 1990s, she was a dancer and teacher of Tibetan Opera in Lhasa. She is a mature woman, physically slender, and very fit. Her directions were exact and meant to be followed precisely. All of her conversation was in Tibetan as she doesn't speak English. The choreographer also communicated non-verbally, her hands were particularly expressive. In fact, her entire body was a tool for instruction.

A dancer, Ri., explained that the dancers were all volunteers, and therefore they required intensive rehearsal. The Calgary women, she said, expected to practice in a meticulous manner so they wouldn't "get rusty" or forget what they already knew. Their intention was to expand their repertoire, which at this time was limited to four authentic Tibetan dances. The choreographer told me through the interpreter that she also wanted to bring the dancers up to another level of performance, making their dancing more professional. It was evident the women were serious – albeit in a playful manner – they worked at becoming better dancers.

Ri., a striking-looking professional woman, spoke about how the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group represented the Tibetan-in-exile culture on stage, and explained why it was important to perform at a high level for the Tibetan-Canadian community in Calgary. She was proud to participate in the dance group, she said. And even though her schedule was crowded, she made room to rehearse with the women – even though it was difficult for everyone to meet at the same time. Sharing a meal together, accompanied by

their families, the rehearsals tended to be regarded as social events, as something to be enjoyed by the community making it somewhat easier to organize.

The women also rehearsed on stage before a public performance usually for an hour. After these rehearsals, the dancers would eat together backstage, making both the performance and rehearsal a community event.

Performances

The Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group in Calgary regularly put on fundraisers, buttressed by other community activities. A recent *Tibet Cultural Evening* at the University of Calgary, for instance, included a Tibetan Bazaar, a silent auction, singing and dancing, alongside a Tibetan 'fashion show' of traditional dress, with an invocation by a Buddhist lama at the beginning of the whole program. The guest list for these events invariably includes elected government officials, as well as representatives from service organizations. These attendees are points of pride for the Tibetan-Canadian community, proof that they are accorded respect by leaders in Calgary.

The format of an evening or afternoon performance typically begins with Ts.(organizer) briefly thanking supporters of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation, before inviting a Tibetan lama to bless the event with a prayer. Tibetan singers then take to the stage, followed by dancers in authentic traditional dress. Costumes particular to regions of Tibet were highlighted and discussed by Ts. from the podium informing the audience with

detailed description (Plates 40 & 41). Ts. told me that some of the distinctive regional dress had to be constructed from scratch by "Tibetan tailors in India." The 'fashion show' featured nomad *chupas*, costumes from the former Chamdo and Ngari regions in Tibet, as well as the dress of a government official and a tax collector, worn prior to 1959 in Tibet (Plates 42 & 43). The costumes were authentic recreations depicting a historic Tibet, which is no more. Ts. also commissioned headdresses to complete the costume wardrobe. However, I noted and discussed with Ts. that Tibetan footwear was absent from the performances. She explained authentic Tibetan footwear is very expensive, quite beyond the reach of her budget. Regardless, her intention was to acquire the funds necessary to purchase the elaborate and colourful embroidered boots (Plate 44).

The 'fashion show' and dance costumes visually identify Tibetan-Canadians in Calgary as a unique group with a rich cultural heritage. The dances performed by the women demonstrate a unique style of step dancing, complemented by a swirl of fabric, and animated by graceful arm movements. A typical performance is not just an entertainment, but rather a rewarding cultural experience of Tibetan culture evoked through song, music, dress and dance.

The Tibetan-Canadian women from Calgary also perform in Edmonton, Alberta's capital city. A recent evening of traditional dance was put on at a community hall in Edmonton. The organizers were from *Gaden Samten Ling,* a Buddhist meditation group in the city. It is not uncommon for Tibetan Buddhist groups to cooperate, especially on cultural events to bring in *lama* teachers from afar.

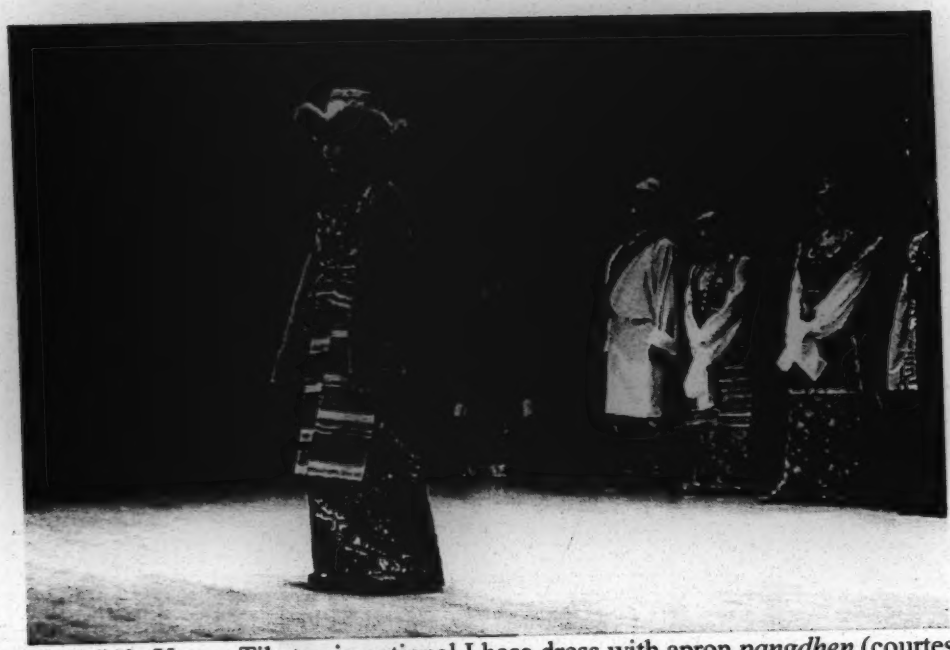

Plate #40- Young Tibetan in national Lhasa dress with apron *pangdhen* (courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

Plate #41- Tibetan fashion show female nomad costume with fox fur hat of Eastern Tibet. (Courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

Plate #42- Woman in Chamdo (Northeastern Tibet) costume with conical hat (courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

Plate #43- Woman in Ngari (Southwestern Tibet) costume with pearl headdress (courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

Plate #44- Tibetan boots made of wool felt with colourful hand stitched embroidery Central Tibet (Courtesy of The Clothing and Textiles Collection, Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada).

As usual, the evening included a bazaar, silent auction, and the dance performance. The hall had a complete kitchen facility, so the opportunity was afforded to put on a Tibetan dinner. *Mo-mos* are a crowd-pleaser, Tibetan dumplings, which tend to stick to the waist!. A hot beverage made with copious amounts of butter, salt, and the juice from boiled tea leaves is a staple of the Tibetan people and is expected at these cultural events.

There was quite a mix of people at the Edmonton event. Buddhist nuns were in attendance, a focal point for the curious as one youngster blurted out, "You don't look like a girl!", which prompted an explanation of why the woman's hair had been shorn. Bargain hunters found bargains, the young, the old, alongside Western students of Tibetan Buddhism asked questions, and people being people milled about taking in the sights, the sound and smells of Tibet. Ts. later told me the Tibetan 'fashion show' had to be canceled because there were not enough people to model the costumes. This is an ongoing problem with upwards of twenty full costumes in her collection.

The community hall didn't have a formal stage, but the Tibetan-Canadian women from Calgary were quick to adapt to this situation. They performed two dances on the limited floor space, snug with the audience. The performers led the crowd in a group 'line dance,' all the while demonstrating the necessary steps. At that moment, I realized and I suspect my thesis advisor who accompanied me did as well, how difficult it was to follow the choreography, coordinated with music and the rhythm of an unmistakable, yet unfamiliar beat. We laughed, as both my thesis advisor and I, along with much of the crowd, clumsily attempted what the women dancers from Calgary made look so easy. It

was clear that Tibetan dance required a high level of competency to master and we were novice beginners.

Tibetan Visits

The Tibetan-Canadian women from Calgary intended to stay at the *Gaden Samten Ling* meditation center, but soon discovered the fumes of a recent paint job were too much to handle. Earlier, I had offered my home as accommodation if finding a place to stay proved to be a problem in Edmonton. Fortunately, the women remembered my offer, calling just after midnight. While they were relieved to find another place to stay for the night, the women kept their sense of humour with a playfulness often ascribed to the Tibetan people. My husband laughed, reminding me "with all the incense these folks burn, you'd figure the paint fumes wouldn't get to them."

The Tibetan-Canadian women were comfortable, as if it were second nature to share a single room with mattresses scattered on the floor and a couple of 'foamy' floor mats to bed a total of eight people. It was late, very late, but the women chatted quietly and occasionally laughter would erupt from the basement.

Next morning, I accompanied the women to a breakfast at a nearby restaurant. Again, it was a communal experience and presented an opportunity to speak with the choreographer albeit through an interpreter. I asked her about her plans for the future of the dance group. I immediately sensed her enthusiasm. She intended to add to the

repertoire, making the performance as professional as possible to a standard she recalled from her years on the stage. With breakfast complete, we lingered longer than the waitress might have liked. Just before noon, the dancers and the choreographer piled into one van and drove home to Calgary.

It is also worth noting the visit of a Tibetan *rinpoche* and his entourage. After driving his attendants through the night from Vancouver (freshly arrived on Canadian soil), the *rinpoche* later arrived to join them for a brief stay in my home in Edmonton. The three men enjoyed their *chai* tea and spicy Tibetan cuisine, which I acquired from a Chinese 'mall' specializing in 'ethnic' food. And when they weren't meditating, considerable time was spent chanting in my home. The monks were not proficient in speaking English. It was humorous to see three grown men, my husband and I reduced to communicating with the kind of rudimentary language appropriate for a very young child. And yet, through it all we were able to enjoy each other's company. They were a pleasure to have as houseguests. Although, I must say by Western-standards and given the reality of an Edmonton winter, I found it intriguing that they preferred to keep the doors open.

It soon became apparent the *rinpoche's* attendants had never been outside of Tibet. The *kenpo* abbot of the *rinpoche's* monastery found himself confounded by an escalator in a shopping mall. My husband demonstrated how to mount the elevating device with great verve. The *kenpo* jumped on with equal verve, copying his every move. And, later, after crossing a 'plus-fifteen' overpass connecting one building with another in the downtown, the Abbott literally gasped upon entering into a hotel atrium, where a tuxedoed musician

played a white baby grand. It must have been a surreal experience for this visiting Abbott.

Tibetan Bazaar

Thirteen years ago, *Gaden Samten Ling* sponsored a Tibetan Bazaar to raise money for their meditation centre in Edmonton. It has become an annual event held every fall in the capital city. Tibetan-Canadians look forward to this event, traveling from far and wide – some bringing wares to sell, others like the Calgary women performing Tibetan dances, and still others coming to meet lama teachers.

The resident lama of *Gaden Samten Ling* gave a formal talk on 'loving compassion,' focusing on the Buddhist principles of happiness achieved through contemplation. Lama Kushok hopes to be a new Canadian, and at the time of the fall Bazaar was a 'landed immigrant.' This finally accorded him status when he traveled abroad, he gratefully acknowledged, something he lacked as a stateless refugee. The lama arrived in Canada in 2000. He was born in Tibet, but lost his parents shortly after the Lhasa Uprising of 1959. His uncle managed to send him to northern India, no easy feat. As an orphan, the youngster was accepted into a monastery. Dharamsala for a long while was his only refuge, and source of training. He considers himself fortunate to be in Canada and seems remarkably happy given his early life experiences.

Lama Kushok's talk was followed by a slide show on Tibet. A Red Deer College instructor had freshly returned from a trip to Tibet over the summer. His pictures of Lhasa and Mount Kailash, a mountain sacred to both the Buddhist and Hindu religions, seemed to conflict with the political reality of the place. Tibet is an occupied country (so says the U.S. Congress). Here were pictures I thought that idealized Tibet, in a fashion reminiscent of the myth of *shangri la*.

The pictures showed men and women dancing on a rooftop in Lhasa, a performance for tourists to the city. The dancers stomped down the earthen roof, flattening it, performing what looked to be the *arya charya* 'work dance'. The slide transparencies also showed Tibetans strolling the streets of Lhasa in traditional dress, alongside others in Western-style garb. However, the instructor's photos, taken in the far western part of TAR, showed Tibetans wearing traditional dress.

There was a spontaneous performance at the Tibetan Bazaar. A young Tibetan-Canadian man began to sing and dance, forming a line with people in the hall. Everyone seemed to enjoy this impromptu performance, dancing as he danced or stamping their feet in time with the tune. Some of the Western women, members of *Gaden Samten Ling* take great pleasure in Tibetan dress, wearing the *chupa*, *wonchu* and *pangdhen* apron at the Bazaar. Their 'costume' corresponded with the celebratory mood of the event. However, it wasn't clear if they understood the significance of traditional dress as a means of "keeping the culture alive," something that Ts. has continuously impressed upon me.

Calgary Visit

I visited Ri. (dancer) and her extended family in Calgary, staying with them for a few nights. A Buddhist 'shrine room' is centrally located in the home. It's a well-appointed space designed to assist meditation, with scatter cushions on the floor and elaborate *thangka* wall hangings depicting Buddhist deities. A handsome statue of Buddha, himself, is prominently displayed inside in an ornately carved wooden altar. The handmade cabinet held several butter lamps, as well as offering bowls. Fresh flowers were also on the mantle. The peaceful atmosphere was an invitation to quietly sit and contemplate the Buddha. The care and attention taken in constructing the Tibetan-Canadian family's shrine room reflects the important role that religion plays in their lives.

Ri.'s mother lives with the family and looks after the children when she is away at work. She also teaches them how to speak Tibetan with a grandmother's loving care. For instance, she cleverly demonstrated to her granddaughter how to write Tibetan script on a styrofoam board. She inscribed the styrofoam with deep impressions of the stylized-text so that her granddaughter could practice writing the script by tracing over the Tibetan characters. Tibetan calligraphy has elongated characters with flowing forms, which has people collecting this unique and distinct calligraphy. Later, I got some culinary tips from the grandmother, such as hot spice concoctions that make Tibetan cuisine sing. Through it all, I also acquired a taste for *chai* tea, which is a spicy hot drink.

Ri. was quite pleased to share her music video collection of Tibetan contemporary-pop singers and dancers who are stars in the People's Republic of China. The female performers had spectacular costumes, an amalgam of fashion and fur hats from Tibetan nomad dress. One singer performed her video on the steps of what looked to be a reconstructed Buddhist monastery in the TAR. The singing and dancing was spellbinding combined with impressive shots of the Tibetan landscape. I was also struck by similarities of dance styles depicted in the music video and the Tibetan-Canadian women of Calgary's use of hand gestures and careful choreographed step dancing.

Ri. is acutely aware of the plight of Tibetan people in Tibet. However, she took great pride in playing the music videos of Tibetan stars in the People's Republic of China. It was a vindication, a confirmation that the Tibetan people had something important to offer to the world, something the Chinese fully appreciated.

Ri. always addressed her children in Tibetan while I was in the home, ensuring that the children are taught the Tibetan language and know Tibetan arts . However, it's the public schoolyard where language and culture can slip. Fortunately, Ri's are in a primary school that consists of a rainbow of cultural groups. One evening, Ri. and her husband, himself, a former Tibetan refugee, helped their daughter prepare a presentation on Tibet, its culture and history, along with a sample of the national cuisine. In this Calgary Tibetan-Canadian household, an intergenerational transference of culture occurs through language and the Tibetan arts such as calligraphy. These activities are part of Tibetan cultural

continuity. I learned a tremendous amount about Tibetan family life and culture while visiting this Tibetan-Canadian family in Calgary.

The Tibetan Dancers

Ts. (the organizer) was born in 1962, in a refugee camp in northeastern India. Her father escaped to India following the failed 1959 national uprising in Tibet. She attended school in New Delhi sponsored by Danish and German patrons. Ts. completed her university education in India. In 1987, she immigrated to Canada to marry a fellow Tibetan-in-exile. Her direct experience of the ambiguity of life as a refugee and the camps prompted her activism in the Tibetan-Canadian community in Calgary. She has sponsored many refugees and continues to support her family in India. However, over the last seven years both her sister and mother have immigrated to Canada.

Pe. in her mid-60s is a former Tibetan aristocrat. She recently immigrated to Calgary from the TAR. In her youth, she was a professional choreographer and dancer living in Lhasa. Ri. is also from Lhasa, and is a recent arrival to Canada as a 'landed immigrant.' She is thirty-five years old and married to a Tibetan-in-exile with two children who were born in Canada.

Tsg. was born in India, and was part of the first wave of Tibetan immigration to Canada in 1971. She lived in Lethbridge, Alberta, later relocating as so many other Tibetans-in-exile have to Calgary. Her father was a Tibetan soldier, who fled the country after the

1959 national uprising. Since the mid-1980s, Tsg. has worked in a university laboratory. She is married with two children.

Ya. was born in eastern India. She is thirty-seven years old, and married with a son. She met her husband in New Delhi, before immigrating to Canada fifteen years ago. Pel., in her early forties, was born in Lhasa. In 1987, her future husband, a Tibetan-in-exile living in Calgary, sponsored her to come to Canada. She has been dancing most of her life. Her mother is the choreographer of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group.

Di. and Ka. are the two youngest dancers of the group. In her early twenties, Di. was born in Canada. Her father is a former monk. Her cousin Ka. was born in Japan. Her uncle is a former monk, and both young women attend the University of Calgary.

Tibetan Women Speak

Ts. is on the board of the Tibetan Women's Association in Calgary. The position complements her other volunteer work – organizing costumed dance performance in Calgary to preserve authentic Tibetan culture. She is deeply concerned about the '*sinicization*' of Tibet, which is the process of refashioning Tibetan culture into a stylized version consistent with the aims of the People's Republic of China. Ts. is also convinced the occupying government is "extinguishing" the indigenous culture of Tibet and its cultural practices. Therefore, she reasons, dance in traditional costume is a way to conserve, as well as authentically recreate Tibetan culture. She believes the presentation

of her collection in a costumed dance performance represents a snapshot of life as it once was in Tibet.

> My first goal was to preserve Tibetan culture… to preserve something like the original before 1959… [W]hen we dance we hit two birds with one stone, you know. It preserves the culture and promotes the Tibetan cause. When you perform, you are able to say something about Tibet and the [political] situation… My main objective is to do fundraising. We used to help the refugee camps, and now we help the orphanages.
>
> Ts.

Ri. also talked about how dancing in traditional costume served to promote Tibet and its culture.

> It tells how it's different from China. It shows our identity. Just like our language and our religion. It's equally important to show people that we have our <u>own</u> dance, our <u>own</u> costumes that are very different from others. So people come away from performances learning something about the uniqueness of Tibetan culture. And that's important.
>
> Ri.

Ri also emphasized during our conversation that performing was her way to contribute to the Tibetan-Canadian community in Calgary.

The TAR is considered a remote and isolated locale, even within the People's Republic of China and much of the present mythology surrounding Tibet stems from this fact. Tse.

spoke about the opportunity that performing in Tibetan dress provided to portray Tibet and its' place in Asia accurately.

> It's nice to be able to show where we came from and how we came to be – and that we are still trying to keep that alive… Here in the West, it's kind of hard because this is Western society…[Westerners can't discriminate] Tibetan culture and identity … we're all Asians.
>
> Tse.

There is a consensus among the dance group that performance is a way of expressing themselves as Tibetan people with a unique cultural identity. Pel, from the perspective of a mature woman, regarded her participation as a demonstration of her culture and as a way of living out the culture she left behind. She also spoke of her dancing as being a purely voluntary act, her personal contribution to the Tibetan cause while raising funds to help others.

> Oh, yeah, I'm very proud. To show people what we look like, how we are different, and how we are different from other nations.
>
> Pel.

Yan. stated that dancing was a way of helping out her friend working with the Tibetan community. She also talked about how performing on stage presents Tibetan culture while making people aware of Tibetan issues. Her comments illustrate how participating in the dance is important on many levels the personal, social and cultural.

> Ts. is a very good friend of mine. She does quite a bit for the Tibetan cause… So, I help her whenever there's a dance [or] a performance she needs to do for her

> organization… I always try to go to the dance so we can show our culture. That's how we can show it here through the dance… That's how we try to bring up awareness for Tibetan cause.
>
> Yan.

Yan. also discussed how she was recruited to raise funds for Tibetan orphanages. They are filled to capacity in northern India. Children are still coming out of Tibet over the treacherous mountain passes.

> Ts. asked me and I said yes [to dance]… Especially today there are so many orphaned kids… That's why we are trying to raise as much money as possible so they can have enough food and clothing to survive. accurately
>
> Yan.

As the only former professional in the dance group, Pe. is well aware of the significance of dance and costumed performance: it is a microcosm of the complete Tibetan culture. If you can read the costumes and performance, you are given a tool to understand and empathize with what it means to be a Tibetan. Through the interpreter, Pe. made certain I understood this important point.

> I'm concerned with preserving the distinctive regional dances of Tibet… since coming to Canada this would be good awareness on Tibetan issues and I can also have the culture preserved…. Now with the dance, I wish to express in the free world… to show all our Tibetan qualities – honesty, compassion and pride… to express all that in dance…. We can show that to the world…all our culture and things, all that through the dance.
>
> Pe.

Tibetan cultural differences are expressed with traditional dress. For instance, the apron has a barcode-like pattern of different colours, which can indicate a woman's marital status, social position, and region similar to other folk dress. Tse. noted the challenge of authentically representing *all* of Tibet through dress and dance by the Calgary women.

> Like I say there's different regions. Each region has their own [dress] and we try to match up the costume with the region… [T]here's so many different regions and parts of the country… [From] one valley to the next, the clothing might change a little bit, such as the dialect, too.
>
> Tse.

Ka. and Di. are the two youngest dancers in the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group of Calgary. Both are in their early twenties. Ka. was born in Japan and joined the group to explore her Tibetan roots.

> My family was the only Tibetan family in Kyoto and I lacked a Tibetan community to develop a Tibetan identity… In Calgary, I'm exploring my Tibetan roots by dancing and performing… I'm learning about my Tibetan culture through dancing and other group activities.
>
> Ka.

Di. spoke about being adrift from her Tibetan cultural origins. She was born in Canada, and contemporary culture has had a profound affect on her upbringing. Joining the group, at first, seemed like a fun thing to do with her friend. Her intention was not to raise funds for this or that cause, but rather to socialize and enjoy herself.

> The main reason is that Ts. is my cousin and she asked me to dance. And I said I'd love to. We go out there and perform. And it gives you a sense of pride in being Tibetan, you know.... I've drifted apart from my Tibetan culture. I'm influenced by Western culture, you know – obviously, living in Canada... I mean, you know – it gives a chance to stay in touch with Tibetan culture and not lose it completely.
>
> Di.

Ka. is presently 21 years old. Prior to her participation in the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group, she had never heard of Tibetan Opera or the *Ache Lhamo* repertoire. This underlines the importance of another key point made by Pe., that it is easy to forget a culture if it is not continuously expressed.

> There are things that she couldn't do (the interpreter said), but she is asking her daughter to do. She has requested her daughter to go around Tibet to get the dance styles of all the regions to preserve it. So that's what you're going to have her daughter do.
>
> Pe

It is by *doing* as Pe. reasons that one can't help but be infused and instilled with what remains of Tibetan culture. The mature dancers of the group generally agree on this point. Ri. was born in Tibet. She talked about what her participation in the dance group in Calgary means to her.

> You know we could dance a little in any Tibetan dress, right. And in Tibet, dance is not something you only perform on stage. It's something that we would do – daily or weekly or monthly. That's something that we are born – born with us, you know. There's a saying that if you're a Tibetan, as long as you can talk, you can sing. [And] as long as you can walk, you can dance. So, it's something that is second nature to us.
>
> Ri.

Tibetan dress is also used by some of the women as a symbol of political protest.

> …when we go on demonstrations [wearing Tibetan dress]…we get into – you know – identity. I take pride in it…. we are still trying to keep that alive…
>
> Tse.

Cultural survival is important to the Tibetan-Canadian community in Calgary. Maintaining the sense of a Tibetan identity – "keeping the culture alive" in Canada – is a sentiment frequently echoed by the women of the dance group. The children of Tibetans-in-exile born in Canada are sometimes sent to dance instructors in the community familiar with the culture. It's an opportunity for children as a visible minority to become a majority when they congregate together in one class.

Di. was trained as a child by an accomplished teacher schooled in the Tibetan dance tradition. Di. now as a young woman compared the dance-styles, she learned back then with what she is learning with the dance group. I was left with the feeling that Di. preferred to perform and be faithful to the tradition – not because she was resistant to change, but rather because she enjoys, appreciates, and honours traditional Tibetan dance.

> I would have to say I prefer the way I was taught before. The older dances for me – the way they were taught way back when – it's not a bad thing – tradition. I prefer the other older dances."
>
> Di.

The organizer of the women's dance group has a goal to encourage more Tibetan-Canadian youngsters to take an interest in their heritage. That encouragement begins in the home, and right on up into the rehearsal hall.

> There's a Tibetan community of Alberta small dance group that gets the kids together. Actually, there's the younger kids, the teenagers and we have the older ones [in the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group of Calgary].
>
> Tse.

> I teach my daughter to keep it up – dance. Don't forget our culture… She's fifteen… They practice and meet whenever.
>
> Pel.

Tibetan Dress and Dance in Performance

The Calgary Tibetan women performed the lay dance *Sat Thung Thing Ke Lu* (the Song of the Grassland, from southeastern Tibet) in Lhasa-style traditional dress (Plate 45). All the dancers wore long sleeved white *wonchus* (blouses) under silk brocade *chupas* (robes) with *pangdhens* (aprons). The rich brocade *chupas* varied in colour: blue, purple, golden-yellow and green silks. The dancers wore aprons over their *chupas*, some with the narrow striped multi-coloured navy apron, and others wore the wider striped bright coloured *pangdhen* apron in pinks, shades of yellow, gold and blues. The wider striped and brighter coloured aprons are an adaptation of the traditional Tibetan apron.

The dancers wore the *Tsering Kyi Kor,* a formal Tibetan hat, which is worn on special

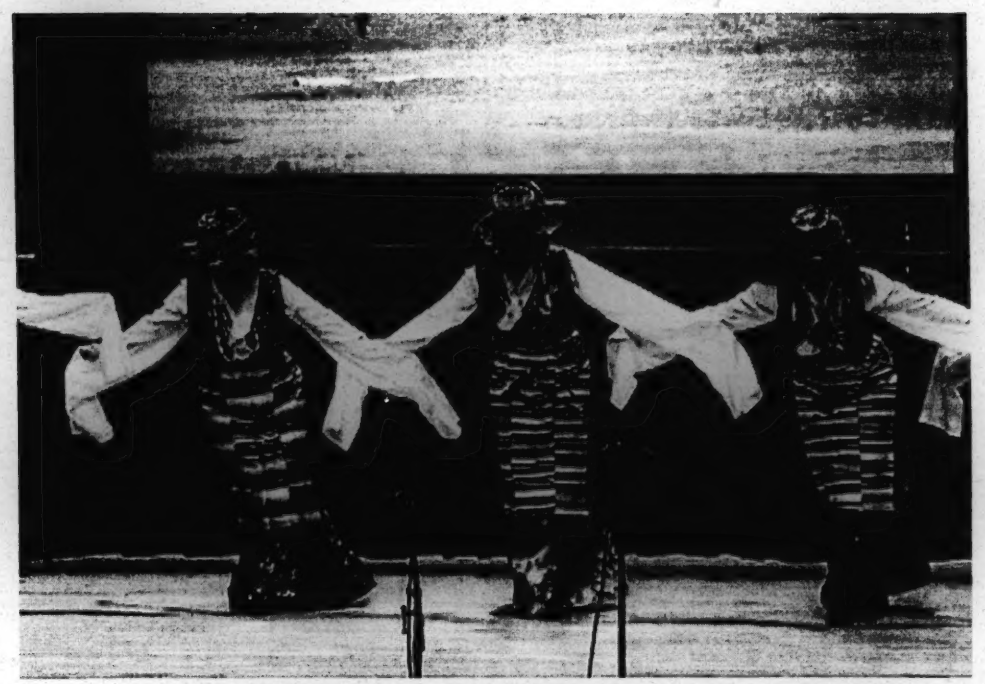

Plate #45- Tibetan women dancing the 'Sat Thung Thing Ke Lu' in national Lhasa dress. (Courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

Plate #46- Dancers in costume performing the 'Dat Wae Shu Nu' dance. (Courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

occasions for weddings and celebrations. The pillbox shaped hat with fur flaps, was made of silk brocade in gold, red, or blue. A necklace of pearls and coral, as well as a turquoise *charm box* adorn their costumes creating an elaborate and rich look for the dance performers. Traditionally, Tibetan jewelry held an important place in dress, particularly at festivals and celebrations.

The *Sat Thung Ke Lu* dance was performed as an 'everyday dance,' anytime of the year by men and women on the grasslands, with quick stamping step movements. The dance was usually performed in a circle – men on one side, the women on the other. The Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group choreographer modified the dance so that it can be performed in a single line – only by the women – with long sweeping arm movements. In Tibet, men perform this dance with different hand gestures. The choreographer and organizer have been selecting the more popular Tibetan dances for their repertoire. The organizer had the costumes made in India, paying particular attention to the construction of the *Tsering Kyi Kor* headdresses in brilliant brocades.

The second dance performed was *Dat Wae Shu Nu* (Youth Moon, from Central Tibet), which is performed as a 'dance of celebration' usually inside the home on special occasions such as weddings and the New Year's *Losar* (Plate 46). This is a dance performed exclusively by women.

Dat Wae Shu Nu is a contemporary dance created after 1959. It is inspired by tradition. The dancers perform in the traditional Lhasa dress of Utsang province in Central Tibet

(Figure 6). The women wear the *chupa* (dress) and *wonchu* (blouse) in a variety of colours. The *chupas* were in an assortment of silk brocade colours, including red, black, blue and green. The *wonchus* included both short and long sleeve styles. The dancers wore the multi-coloured apron in both the wider and narrower striped styles. The dancers also wore the turquoise *charm box* necklace with the costume. This style of dress was reserved for special occasions. However, the Calgary dancers did not wear the formal *Tsering Kyi Kor* headdress to complete the costume to vary their costumes for staged performance. The short-sleeved *wonchus* worn by the dancers was another adaptation to this traditional Lhasa dress. The performers used harmonious hand gestures dancing first in one line, then in two circles, creating a pleasing staged performance.

Ahma Hola, 'How Wonderful the Dance' from southeastern Tibet, is a contemporary dance performed on special occasions such as weddings and during the Tibetan New Year's celebrations (Plate 47). It is regarded as an auspicious song and dance, an invocation for good luck and happiness popular at outdoor grassland meeting places. The organizer explained that it is the wording of the song makes the dance particularly favorable. This is a contemporary piece created after 1959.

Ahma Hola is performed in long sleeved turquoise *wonchus* and long black skirts with coral sashes tied at centre back in a bow. The skirt front had strands of pearl beads attached to the coral sash. The dancers wore headdresses, consisting of coral and turquoise stones on coral fabric. They also wore necklaces of coral and turquoise along with beaded earrings. Tibetan women have traditionally worn coral and turquoise beads

Page #126 (figure #6) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed was figure #6 depicting a map of Tibet regions prior to 1959. This map was located at the New Zealand Friends of Tibet website www.friends-of-tibet.org.nz/images/map.jpg**.**

Plate #47- Dancers in costume performing the 'Ahma Hola' at the University of Calgary (Courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, 2004).

in their necklaces and headdresses. The dancers did not wear the traditional Tibetan *pangdhen* apron or *chupa* for this contemporary dance. *Ahma Hola* is the only dance, which featured all the performers in identical costumes, perhaps as a means to position it as a contemporary staged costumed presentations.

In Tibet, men and women perform *Ahma Hola* together in a circle. However, the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group begins their performance in a line, eventually breaking into two lines to symbolize men and women then form a circle. The choreographer modified the dance because no men are involved with the dance group.

The fourth dance is *Kalsang Nang Ma* inspired by dances of Central Tibet and is another contemporary piece created after1959. It, too, is performed during special occasions and holiday celebrations such as *Losar* Tibetan New Year. The organizer explained that only women perform *Kalsang Nang Ma*. It is considered "auspicious and is performed to wish good luck for the royal family". As in the first dance, the Tibetan women wore the Lhasa formal dress of the *chupa*, the *wonchu* shirt, the *charm box* necklace and the *Tsering Kying Koi* brocade hat (Plate 48). The dance is also popular in the home, and like the *Dat Wae Shu Nu*, the women dance as a group in a line. This dance is unlike dances performed by men and women in a circle on the grasslands.

In September 2004, the dance group was rehearsing the *Ba Shay* dance from southeastern Tibet, Kham region (Figure 5). The Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group also intended to include the *Ba Shay* dance from eastern Tibet in their repertoire. This is a

song and dance performed before sending a young woman off to be married. The wedding dance is performed indoors by women wearing *Khamo* dress with a stone turquoise headdress. The Ba region of southeastern Tibet has a much slower regional dance different from Central Tibet's quick stepping dance style.

The Tibetan women are working to include both traditional and contemporary dances in their repertoire. The organizer is concerned about acquiring the funds to have Tibetan dress constructed to represent the different regions of Tibet.

The choreographer intends to build a repertoire with a variety of styles to reflect the diversity of traditional dress and dance in Tibet. However, she is not blind to modernity. The choreographer made a conscious choice to modify the dances in an effort to keep up with the times. She based the dances on old Tibetan folk dances, modifying them for the stage to present Tibetan dance to a contemporary audience. Some of the dances the Tibetan-Canadian women perform have been modified to reflect contemporary tastes, incorporating faster hand gestures and facial expressions to display emotion, unlike traditional Tibetan dance, which involves no facial expression. She took pains to explain that the dances were not based on Chinese dance but were inspired by traditional Tibetan folk dances.

The choreographer would also like to stage dances from Tibetan Opera, as this was her area of expertise when she lived in Lhasa. *Ache Lhamo* requires significant expenditures on wardrobe and performers with considerable levels of training. Tibetan-Canadians

Plate #48- Dancers in costume for 'Kalsang Nang Ma' dance and the author. (Courtesy of Appropriate Entertainment Ltd. Calgary, Alberta, 2004).

incorporating faster hand gestures and facial expressions to display emotion, unlike traditional Tibetan dance, which involves no facial expression. She took pains to explain that the dances were not based on Chinese dance but were inspired by traditional Tibetan folk dances.

The choreographer would also like to stage dances from Tibetan Opera, as this was her area of expertise when she lived in Lhasa. *Ache Lhamo* requires significant expenditures on wardrobe and performers with considerable levels of training. Tibetan-Canadians living in Calgary are not set up to the demands of *Ache Lhamo,* however the choreographer has aspirations to present the Tibetan Opera.

Tibetans-in-exile modified women's dress after 1959 by eliminating the sash around the waist. They now use less fabric to construct the *chupa* dress. The apron had narrower stripes before 1959 and was worn below the knee. After1959, the apron was shortened to above the knee, with some having wider stripes. I was intrigued by the old maxim to watch the length of women's skirts to gauge the times, which may well have cross-cultural applications. However, the organizer explained that the rationale for the modification had more to do with the extremes of hot and humid weather in India.

DISCUSSION

DANCE IN TRADITIONAL COSTUMES TO PRESERVE CULTURE

The organizer, choreographer, and dancers in Calgary make use of Tibetan dress as a way of preserving their Tibetan culture. Ts. insisted that Tibetan culture and practices are "being extinguished" by the People's Republic of China. Inspired by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, she took it upon herself to organize staged dance performances in Tibetan dress as a means of conserving Tibetan culture prior to 1959.

The choreographer is also concerned with preserving Tibetan culture, so "that it will not be soon forgotten." She wants to show the world Tibetan culture through dance. She also intends to record regional traditional folk dances of Tibet, preserving them for future generations. Her daughter is involved with her mother's plan, supporting her commitment to "keep the culture alive."

Tse. expressed pride in the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group performances in Calgary. It demonstrates where Tibetans come from, how they came to be, and that the culture is still alive by virtue of the costumed dance performed by the women's group. She also described how Tibetans in India maintain their culture, which she says is more difficult to do in the west. Nonetheless, Tse. makes an effort to live out her culture through dress and dance.

Ri. also talked about how dance performance in Tibetan national dress served to promote the Tibetan people and their culture. Ri. articulated how her culture was distinct from the Chinese in Tibet. She thinks it is important to show people that Tibetans have their own dress and dance. Pel. stated that dancing in traditional dress distinguishes the Tibetan

people from other people in Asia. These Tibetan women feel that the audience will come away from their performances with a better understanding of their unique Tibetan culture.

The organizer agreed that Tibetan dress and dance performance is unique, which makes it also useful as a fundraising tool in the community of Calgary. Her intention is to expand the performance schedule of the women's dance group, raising more funds by taking their dance program to other areas in the province.

DRESS AND DANCE: BUILDING AWARENESS AND FUNDRAISING

The mature Tibetan dancers, in particular, were focused on raising funds, building an awareness of the Tibetan political situation, and establishing their identity in Calgary.

Tse., a dancer, outlined the genesis of the dance group. It began with "one friend who wanted to do more" for Tibetans. Ts., the organizer, talked about dress and dance in staged performance as a means of preserving the Tibetan culture and promoting Tibetan relief projects. The choreographer echoed this view, stressing that dance builds a greater awareness of Tibetan issues in the world.

One of the organizer's primary objectives for the Calgary women's dance group was to raise funds for Tibetan orphanages in India. Tse., a quiet and reserved person, also remarked that dress and dance in performance created the conditions for her to speak up about the Tibetan cause. Yan. and other dancers discussed in detail how their costumed

dance performance fostered interest in Tibet. Yan said that by wearing Tibetan dress you could talk about Tibet.

The dancers also recognized the pivotal role the organizer played in gaining attention for the Tibetan cause. Everyone in the group expressed a desire to help Ts. whenever there was an opportunity to dance at fundraising events. The younger dancers did not talk much about fundraising initiatives. They were more concerned with keeping in touch with Tibetan culture, developing and maintaining a distinct Tibetan identity in Canada.

Pel. said it gave her satisfaction to raise funds for Tibetan relief projects. Yan. elaborated that it was very important for Tibetans-in-exile to raise funds for the many orphaned Tibetan children. She emphasized how, as a group, they could make a difference in assuring the children's survival. This was a particularly important issue for the older women in the dance group.

PRIDE IN TIBETAN IDENTITY

Pride kept coming up in the women's conversations. They expressed pride in their performance, in wearing traditional Tibetan dress and as Tibetans-in-exile. Tibetan-Canadians in Calgary are proud to make a contribution to their community through costumed dance performance.

Di. one of the youngest members of the dance group recalled the fun and excitement of dancing at Heritage Days in Calgary, giving her a great sense of pride in being Tibetan. The choreographer wanted the world to remember the old Tibet, in particular the Tibetan qualities of compassion, honesty and pride expressed through dance and the traditional dress of Tibet.

Tse. talked about wearing Tibetan dress as a political and social statement. National dress is particularly significant at rallies for the Tibetan cause. Dress also serves as a sign of respect and deference to Tibetan religious teachers. Tse. pointed out that dress declares identity by portraying Tibetans as a unique culture, separate and distinct from other nationalities in Asia.

The Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group in Calgary uses dress as a way to communicate identity, which relates to the *Meaning and Identity Model* proposed by Roach-Higgins & Eicher's. In this model, dress communicates identity, gender, ethnicity, position and status, which corresponds with the Tibetan-Canadian women's use of dress to signal their cultural identity in dance performance. The women I studied were proud to express their Tibetan heritage on the Canadian stage. They emphasized the importance of keeping their culture alive in Canada through Tibetan dress and dance, which compares with other diaspora communities. Dress and dance brings the community together, as well as allowing Tibetans to express their unique identity as a distinct people to Canadians through staged performance.

CULTURAL CONTINUITY

Tibetan youngsters are encouraged to take an interest in their cultural heritage. However, the organizer of the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group in Calgary expressed concern that contemporary culture competes for their children's attention. Ts. as a consequence is involved with Tibetan youth organizations that are focused on instilling youth with knowledge and pride in Tibetan culture.

Ts. discussed the Tibetan Youth Congress, an initiative to support Tibetan youth living in Europe and Canada. These organizations play a fundamental role in helping to sustain Tibetan culture in the west. Younger dancers talked about performing in traditional dress as a way of maintaining a connection with their cultural roots. Ka. reminded me that she did not have a Tibetan community to speak of in Japan. Her best opportunity to learn about her cultural heritage was by dancing with the Calgary women. She also expressed a desire to learn the language, the music, and art of Tibet, in fact, she was just beginning to learn how to speak Tibetan fluently by participating in the women's group activities.

Di. felt that costumed performance gave her a chance to stay in touch with her Tibetan culture. Her early exposure to Tibetan dance and formal instruction in Calgary prompted her to spend six months in Dharamsala with professional instructors teaching and infusing in her a greater appreciation of Tibetan arts and culture. Di. and Ka., young women in their twenties, were willing to dedicate their time to rehearse and dance in

Tibetan dress. Tse. and Pel. were committed to having their daughters learn Tibetan dance by enrolling them in traditional dance lessons offered through the Tibetan Community of Alberta in Calgary.

Mature dancers were careful to demonstrate the intricacies of various dance movements for the younger women to follow during rehearsals. There was particular attention to subtle hand gestures and the rhythm of dance steps. The older women took the lead in sharing their dance knowledge to the delight of the younger dancers in the group.

The mature dancers addressed questions about technique and performance, which frequently came up during rehearsal. They slowed their movements down to a crawl to show the subtle changes in foot and hand movements. The young women followed their elders emulating their moves, which noticeably improved their dance technique. This transference of Tibetan cultural knowledge was reinforced with all the women speaking Tibetan. They often shared a meal before and after the rehearsal, which was an important time for the women to talk about the upcoming events. They tended to speak in their native tongue, reinforcing their cultural identity. Social gatherings, in general, were also important for cultural transference between the older and younger Tibetan generation.

The Tibetan dancers expressed pride in representing Tibetan culture through dress and dance in Canada. Dance performance in Tibetan dress in a cross-cultural context relates to Nahachewsky's concept of ethnic dance. Some ethnic groups live in their homeland while others like the Tibetans live in diaspora communities, creating the cross-cultural conditions

for ethnic dance. Many ethnic dance enthusiasts are motivated by aspirations of national dress and dance as a positive symbol for a people. Ethnic dance, as defined by Nahachewsky, illustrates the relation between ethno-cultural groups and cultural identity.

Ethnic dance relates to the pride expressed by Tibetans in performing dance in Tibetan dress, constructing a specific history to spread the idea of a people's existence. Ethnic dance with national motivations in a cross-cultural context is useful in understanding Tibetan dance in Calgary. Tibetan Canadians are concerned with the cultural representation of their dress and dance, communicating Tibetan identity and cultural pride. In this cross-cultural context, Tibetan national Lhasa and Khamo dress represent Tibetan cultural identity in ethnic dance.

The human ecological model studies the relationship between human beings and their environments, including the microenvironment of family and home as well as the macroenvironment of culture, education and political system. Tibetans, as a diaspora community in the west, dance in Tibetan dress to present their culture in many cross-cultural environments. Visvader views the form of culture as fitting into its environment, which explains the importance of context in expressing Tibetan culture in different host countries. Comprehending the connections between Canada and India was important in developing an understanding of Tibetans. In India, Tibetan women wear Lhasa dress (Tibetan national dress), which is considered acceptable for everyday dress. However, in Canada, women tend to wear western dress that is felt to be more acceptable to the culture at large, demonstrating the influence of environment on dress.

The variety of connections between Canada and India was important in developing an understanding of Tibetan-Canadians. In my research, the women repeatedly expressed a desire to raise funds for the Tibetan refugee communities in India. The organizer, by commissioning and purchasing costumes in India, financially assisted the Tibetan community in exile. She visited the *Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts* (TIPA) in Dharamsala, and arranged for professional teachers from TIPA to visit Calgary, thereby, augmenting the dancers connection to their Tibetan heritage. One of the younger dancers lived in Dharmsala for six months, taking arts courses while developing cultural ties with Dharmsala. Tibetan dancers have also visited Lhasa, demonstrating cultural links to Tibet. Cultural survival is an issue for Tibetans particularly in preserving their cultural heritage in Canada.

CONCLUSION

His Holiness the Dalai Lama inspired the Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group in Calgary to "keep the culture alive" by organizing and performing dance. Cultural survival is a major issue for Tibetan-Canadians. Tibetans growing up in Canada struggle to maintain their cultural roots, prompting Tibetan women in Calgary to present their heritage in costumed dance performance. Tibetan-Canadian women in this study were concerned that the People's Republic of China was not authentically representing or presenting traditional Tibetan dress and dance.

The research focused on Tibetan women dancing in Tibetan dress very deliberately to present and keep Tibetan culture alive in Canada. In this cross-cultural context, the life experience of Calgary Tibetan women found expression through dress and dance in staged performance. Some ethnic groups live in their homeland while others like the Tibetans live in diaspora communities, creating the cross-cultural conditions for ethnic dance. Ethnic dance with national motivations in a cross-cultural context is useful in understanding Tibetan dance in Calgary. The women expressed a commitment to Tibetan cultural survival within Canada, with dancing in Tibetan dress acting to reinforce their Tibetan cultural identity.

Tibetans have adapted to Canada for their social, cultural and economic survival, forming a diaspora community faced with the challenges of cultural survival. They are concerned with both maintaining and expressing their culture in the different countries in which they live. The Human Ecological Model views the form of culture as fitting into its environment, which explains the importance of context in expressing Tibetan culture in different host countries. Understanding the connections between Canada and India was important in comprehending the differences in dress between the two countries. Tibetan women wear Lhasa dress (Tibet national dress), which is acceptable for everyday dress in India. There are differences between the two countries and consequently the Tibetans have had to adapt to their different environments. Tibetans living in Calgary have had to fit their culture into Canada just as Tibetans-in-exile have had to adapt to life in India.

The Tibetan-Canadian women's dance group in Calgary uses dress as a way to communicate identity, which relates to the *Meaning and Identity Model* proposed by Roach-Higgins & Eicher's. In this model, dress communicates identity, gender, ethnicity, position and status, which correspond with the Tibetan-Canadian women's use of dress to signal their cultural identity in dance performance. Dress is used by the Tibetan-Canadian women to communicate Tibetan identity at demonstrations, to signal deference for a high lama and for special occasions such as Buddhist celebrations. Meaning and identity are bound up with dress, which is important for Tibetan-Canadian women living in Calgary. Costumed dance performance is one way that Tibetan women can communicate their unique cultural identity in the Canadian environment. This model assisted in developing an understanding the relation between identity and Tibetan dress and dance.

In Calgary, the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group has a repertoire of dances performed on the stage for Canadian audiences (Appendix, Tibetan Dances- Lay Dance). Dress and dance originated from eastern and central Tibet with regional Tibetan dress selected to match the regional dances. They performed traditional and contemporary Tibetan dances in a cross-cultural context, fitting all the criteria for ethnic dance as defined by Nahachewsky. Ethnic dance broadens and enhances our understanding of Tibetan dance in Canada. Dance and dress is a way of expressing cultural identity, which allows Tibetans to celebrate their cultural heritage while keeping Tibetan culture alive in Canada.

The Tibetans have an extensive variety of songs and dances. Tibetan dance is grouped around *Cham* Dances, *Ache Lhamo* (Tibetan Opera), and other dances. Lay people perform auspicious dances for good luck and happiness. For instance, at *Losar*, the Tibetan calendar New Year's celebration, contemporary dances, such as *Kalsang Nang Ma* and the *Ahma Hola* are performed alongside traditional dances. Tibetan dances, post 1959, have been developed with more hand movements and facial expression reflecting changes in Tibetan dance. The dress selected for the performances was the regional dress from central Tibet (Utsang) and southeastern Tibet (Khamo) (Figure 5). The Tibetan women in staged performance shared their culture with Canadians while signaling that their culture is alive.

There are dance groups not only in Calgary but also in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal as well as in the U.S.A. The public performance of Tibetan lay dance has been developing over the last ten years with the Tibetan women of Calgary committed to presenting cultural performances in Tibetan regional dress. Cultural performance has been developing over the last ten years building from inroads made by the first Tibetan monks' tours during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The women voiced a desire to preserve their culture through Tibetan dress and dance. They were concerned that their culture was being extinguished in Tibet. In addition, dress and dance in staged performance was also a way for the women to raise funds for Tibetan orphanages in India.

New developments like the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation present Tibetan culture through dress and dance, demonstrates a continued commitment to cultural survival. Tibetan culture represented through costumed dance performance gives voice to their identity on the Canadian stage. Dargyay, in his 1988 study, expressed a concern about Tibetans preserving their cultural heritage. My research builds on Dargyay's study, by investigating the cultural expression of dress and dance for Tibetan-Canadian contributing to an understanding of Tibetan culture.

The Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group has plans to choreograph other Tibetan dances for staged performance. Dress and dance have been adapted and modified reflecting the dynamic process of cultural change and continuity. However, the women remain concerned about preserving their cultural practices. The Tibetan-Canadian women, as the true cultural representatives of Tibetan arts and culture, are maintaining their distinct Tibetan identity within Canada. The Tibetan women counter the People's Republic of China's claim that Tibet and its people are part of China, just one of the ethnic nationalities in the "great family of the Chinese state". Staged costumed performance, therefore, is a way to communicate the women's message. Although their dress and dance have changed, they maintain that they are presenting Tibetan culture by taking ownership of their story in their own authentic Tibetan voice.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A comprehensive documentation of historic Tibetan dress and dance is needed.

A comparative study of Tibetan dress and dance during the periods before and after 1959 would document the impact of the Chinese take-over on Tibetan dress and dance.

A record of current Tibetan dress and dance would document Tibetan culture for future researchers and cultural performers.

On-going comparative studies should be undertaken to document Tibetan dress and dance in Tibet and the Tibetan diaspora.

Comparative research should be conducted focusing on adaptations and modifications of Tibetan dress and dance in different Tibetan global communities.

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APPENDIX

TIBETAN DANCES

1) Gar Dance: Young boys perform for Dalai Lama and Tibetan Officials

2) Cham Dance: Monks or Lamas perform on special occasions
New Year's (Monlam)- Monlam Chenmo Great Prayer Festival Dances

- **Drum Dance**
- **Molham-Cham Prayer Dance**
- **Deer Dance**
- **Gatruk Dance**
- **Jeebalojeh Dance (Little Devils)**
- **Chojong Dance (Lord of Death Defender of Buddhism)**
- **Atasara Dance (Caricature of Indian Brahmins)**
- **Alaka Dance (New Year's Clowns Dance)**
- **Gudo-Cham**
- **Black Hat Dance**
- **Deemoh**
- **Dance of Celestial Travelers**
- **Dance of Sacred Snow Lion**
- **Dance of Black Hat Master**
- **Skeleton Dance**

Nuns perform (contemporary innovation)- Sacred Sword Dance
Masked Dance for Milarepa

3) Lhamo (Tibetan Opera): Male and Female performers
Shoton Festival (traditionally performed at Drepung Monastery)

Dances-

- **Gkoytup**
- **Gyupton**
- **Shan Dur Gorwa**
- **Pukchen**
- **Tegil Gorwa**
- **Dheltup**

Opera Dramas- Sukyi Nyima, Thep Tenpa, Chungpo Dhonyoe and Dhonup, Nangsa, Drimeh Kundan, Drowa Sanemo, Gyasa Bhelsa, Prince Norsang, Doasammo and Pema Woe Gar

4) Lay Dance: Male and Female perform the dances

Harvest Festival Dances (performed by males)

- **Jheluh**
- **Jyagar Rawa**
- **Dance of Offerers or Sacrificers**
- **Trashee Zhonpa**

After the Harvest Dance- Gorshay (men and women perform in circle)

Celebration Dances: New Year's (Losar) Dances

- **Dat Wae Shu Nu**
- **Kalsang Dang Ma**
- **Ahma Hola**
- **Tashi De Lek**
- **Changshay (Wine Dance)**
- **Toeshay**
- **Dro Dance**

Wedding Dances

- **Dat Wae Shu Nu**
- **Kalsang Dang Ma**
- **Ahma Hola**
- **Ba Shay**
- **Toeshay**
- **Dro Dance**

Everyday Dances: (men and women perform)

- **Khongpo**
- **Sat Thung Thing Ke Lu (Grassland Dance)**
- **Work Dances – Arka Chaya**

Ling Dro Dechen Rolm: Buddhist Dance laymen and women perform

Note: the author as part of an independent study prepared this dance list for Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky at the University of Alberta.

TIBETAN TIME LINE CHART

1950- Chinese occupy Tibet

1959- Dalai Lama and approx. 80,000 Tibetans flee Tibet to northern India

1968- Dalai Lama requests the Canadian government to accept Tibetan immigrants

1970- Government of Canada agrees to accept Tibetan immigrants

1971- First groups of Tibetan immigrants resettle in Canada

2003- First performance of Tibet Canada Women's Foundation dance group

Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

Date Submitted: May 3, 2004

1. Investigator(s):
   Principal Investigator and all co-investigators. On graduate student research projects and class projects, the name of the supervisor/instructor must be included. The University of Alberta considers this person responsible for the project.

   Master's of Arts Student: Anne Hill
   Master's Advisor/Supervisor: Professor Anne Lambert

2. University Department or institutional affiliation (if applicable), phone, FAX, e-mail. Provide this information for each investigator.

Anne Hill	Professor Anne Lambert
Graduate Office	Department of Human Ecology
Department of Human Ecology	University of Alberta
University of Alberta	Edmonton, AB T6G 2N1
Edmonton, AB T6G 2N1	(780) 492-1502
arhill@ualberta.ca	anne.lambert@ualberta.ca

3. Institution(s) through which the Research will be carried out:
   University of Alberta

   Other University/Institution (specify)

   Research will be carried out at the University of Alberta

4. Site(s) of data collection: The data will be collected in Calgary Alberta.

5. Title of Project: **04-27 Tibetan Canadian Women in Costumed Dance Performance**

6. Source of project funding:
   (None) a granting agency (Please specify)
   (None) a company (Please specify)
   (None) other, (Please specify)

7. a) Anticipated date of commencement of project (Note that items 7-11 should comprise a maximum of 2 pages).

   The research project is to commence June 1, 2004

b) Anticipated date of completion of the project:

The research project is to be completed by April 1, 2005

8. Purpose and objectives of project:

The project will focus on the meaning of dress and identity of Tibetan women in dance performance within the Canadian context. The research question is: "How does dress express and communicate meaning and identity for Tibetan Canadian women in dance performance?"

9. Rationale for this research:

In 1959, Tibetans were forced to flee Tibet taking with them their culture to countries such as Canada. Tibetans living in Canada are part of the Tibetan Diaspora with Calgary Tibetans forming an immigrant community with an explicit cultural identity. In October 2003, the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation formed a Tibetan women's dance group to perform Tibetan dances in traditional dress. The women are committed to presenting Tibetan culture in costumed performance. The process of maintaining culture is ongoing and the research is focused on documenting this process and relating the findings to the Tibetan Canadian community and to other ethnic cultural groups in Canada. Tibetans growing up in Canada are challenged to maintain their cultural roots. Future generations may need cultural customs and rituals maintained to ensure cultural continuity. My research documentation will be helpful to future generations of Canadian Tibetans.

10. Sample description.
    (a) How many people/communities will be involved?

    The sample will be comprised of approximately 18-20 participants. This will include: the Tibetan women forming the dance group and the choreographer/dance instructor.

    (b) Describe the characteristics of your sample (inclusion/exclusion criteria)?

    The sample inclusion criteria is that the participant be Tibetan born in Canada, India, or Tibet. Living in Canada as a landed immigrant or Canadian. Participating in the Tibetan Women's Dance Groups.

    (c) How are potential participants being recruited or contacted? Attach text of recruitment notice if used as well as the text of the (written or oral) request to participate.

    I have known the Calgary Tibetan community since the 1980's. I have sought their consent in this research effort and adhere to their wishes by respecting and

honouring their cultural values and beliefs. Although I have the approval of the community- each dancer will be approached to individually consent to the interview. This is the process by which I will contact potential participants.

10. Summarize your methodology and procedures. (Append research instruments, guiding questions etc. as appropriate).

    This project will use ethnographic methods as explicated by Tedlock (1991, 2000) to explore the uses and meanings of dress by Tibetan women in dance to express cultural identity in Canada. In this study, data collection will consist of observational data such as field notes, photographs, and audiotape. The participants will be sent a letter requesting that they participate in the study. Only those that indicate a willingness to participate will be approached for an interview. The participant interviews will be recorded on audiotape then transcribed into text. The researcher will keep theoretical notes in a diary to document the progress of the research. Theoretical notes will consist of notes that relate to conceptual or theoretical ideas emerging from the observed data- the dancing Tibetan women in costumed performance (Dr. Jan Morse personal conversation). The researcher will participate in the life-space of the Tibetan women giving exposure to a variety of situations including: social gatherings, dance practices, rehearsals and performances to understand the role of dress in expressing and communicating meaning and identity for Tibetan Canadian women.

    Please find appended: Researcher Fieldwork; Guiding Questions for Interview of Tibetan women; and Guiding Questions for Interview of Tibetan Choreographer.

11. Describe the benefits of the proposed research to the individual/community:

    The research will document their progress as a dance group expressing Tibetan cultural identity and meaning within the Canadian context. Documentation will be shared with the research participants. Members of this cultural community are pleased to allow us to document their dress and dance for the purposes of recording their rich cultural heritage for posterity. The research project will document Tibetan dress and dance in Canada and in so doing help to preserve Tibetan culture in Canada, which is an objective of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation.

12. Describe the risks of the proposed research to the individual/community:

    There are no risks involved in the research project to the individual or community. Members of the Tibetan Calgary community have explicitly stated that there are no risks to participants and related Tibetans living in Canada, India or Tibet.

13. If compensation is to be offered to the individual or community, provide details and rationale:

At present, there is no compensation being offered to the community or to individual Tibetans. Cultural research projects normally involve no monetary incentives for participation.

14. How much time will the participant(s) be required to dedicate to the project? (Include travel time if relevant).

The interviews will be approximately one hour in length with the possibility of a follow-up interview of half an hour. The other part of the research will include participant observation at groups performances and rehearsals not requiring any time or expense on the part of the participants.

16. (a) What provisions are made regarding confidentiality of data and identities?

All participants will be provided with written informed consent under the principles of full disclosure and will be given a copy of the consent form. Standard principles of protection, including the right to refuse, withdraw, or stop an interview will be implemented. Only the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator will have access to the collected data. Original tape recordings and full transcripts with coded subject/interview identifiers will be retained. All transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office. The original transcripts will be kept for 3 years then donated to the archives of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation as a record of Tibetan cultural heritage in Canada. The identities of the participants will not be disclosed by the researchers.

(b) Who will have access to any data in which individuals are identified?

Only the Master's student and thesis advisor will have access to the data in which the individuals are identified. Any written papers or reports will not identify the Tibetan participants involved in this research project. No other parties other than the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation will have access to this information. The tapes will be turned over to the archives of the Tibet Canada Women's Foundation as a record of their cultural heritage.

Consent from agencies or organizations. Some projects require consent from agencies or organizations whose clients or members will be research participants. Please indicate if your project will require additional consent, and the groups/agencies from which consent must be received. Append evidence that the consent has been given by these agencies/groups.

The Tibetan participants will each give their own individual consent to participate in the research project.
Contact name, address, telephone, e-mail of organizational representative:
Name of organization(s)is as follows:

Tseden Dhogonpa, President

Tibet Canada Women's Foundation
Founder of The Tibetan Dance Group
52 Hawkwood Crescent
Calgary, AB T3G 1X5
(403) 246-8017
tcdhogon@ucalgary.ca

18. Consent from participants. (sample consent form and information sheet available on website)

Evidence of free and informed consent by the participant or authorized third party should ordinarily be obtained in writing. Attach a copy of the information sheet and consent form that will be used in the project. If *verbal* consent will be solicited, present a rationale for its' use and a copy of the text that will be used by the researcher in obtaining consent. Describe how evidence of consent will be recorded. In some cases such as mailed questionnaires, consent may be *implied* if someone chooses to complete and return the survey. Attach a copy of the written text that informs potential respondents about the project. If no written or verbal consent is given, present a rationale for the assumption that consent has been given. In some cases, individuals are not legally competent to give consent on their own behalf. Children and adults with some cognitive impairments are examples. In these situations, please indicate how consent will be obtained from authorized third parties (see the GFC Policy Manual Section 66.9.5 and 66.9.6 for details). If you are videotaping or audio taping participants, you must have their consent to do so. The consent form should specify what the data will be used for, and you need to request permission to use the data for the purposes specified.

_____ Date:_____
Signature of Principal Investigator

_____
Name of Principal Investigator

_____ Date:_____
Signature of Co-Investigator

_____
Name of Co-Investigator

_____ Date:_____
Signature of Co-Investigator

_____
Name of Co-Investigator

"The Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics is collecting this information, and it may be subject to a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOPP) request."

Submit your original copy of this application, plus eight copies, to: Secretary to the Human Research Ethics Board, 2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta.
Note: Please note that the wording and format has been drawn from the Ukrainian Folklore Institute, which researches Ukrainian culture in Canada.